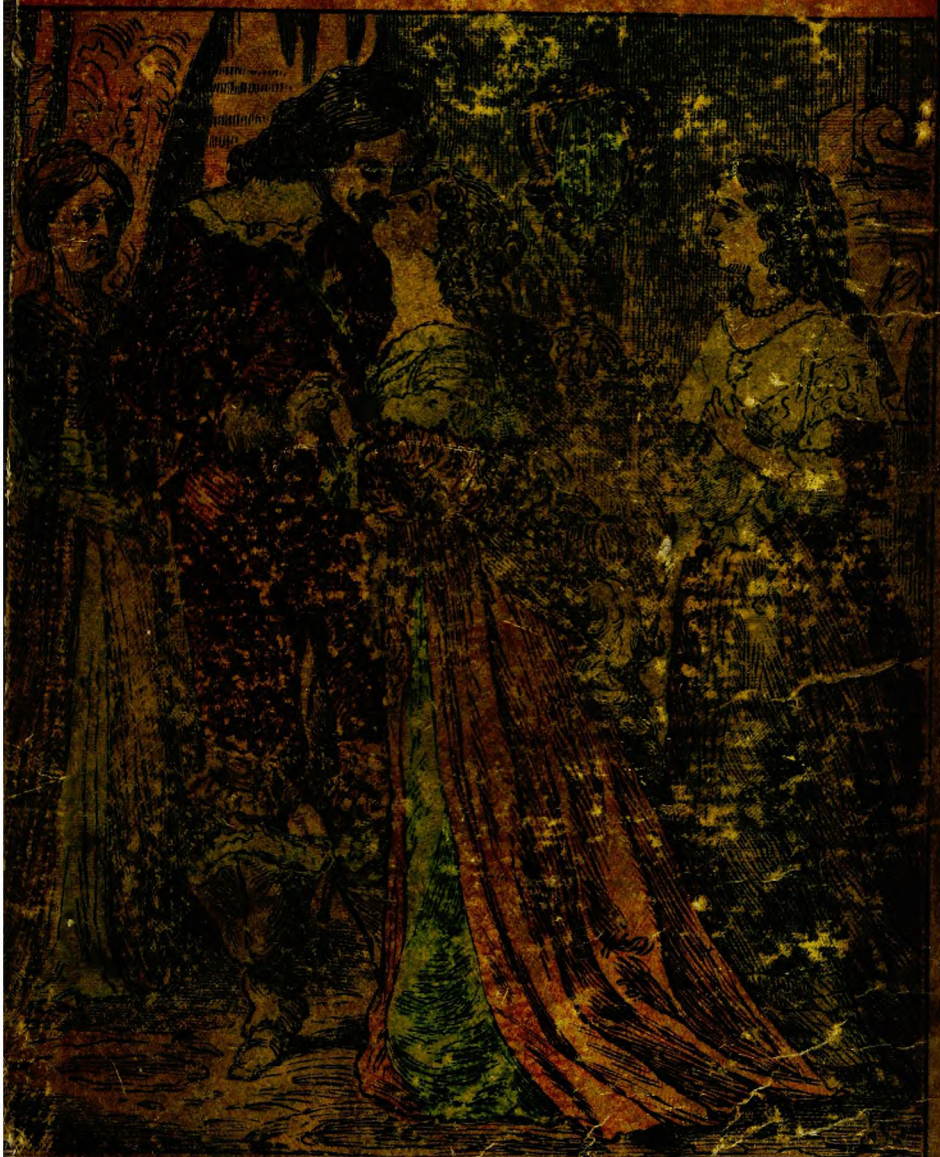




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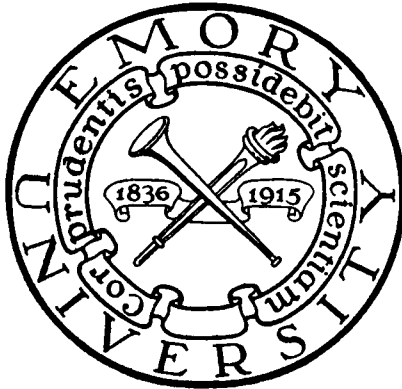
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# BERNARD MARSH.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE CHÂTEAU OF BELAYE.

**N**ONE of the most curious histories which could be written would be that of the variation of taste. Wigs, powder, pig-tails, hoops, wimples, fardingales, patches, and thunder-and-lightning stockings, have all had their adorers, have all been thought indispensable to fashion and taste, and then, in a few short years, have been condemned as the most hideous monstrosities by a succeeding generation. But no man has had experience enough to compile such a history. The half-dozen variations which he may have seen in his own time could give but little illustration of the subject ; and, although I have faint reminiscences of powder, a vague idea of pig-tails, and a distinct remembrance of ladies in tight

gowns which gave them the appearance of being sewed up in eelskins, yet I do not consider that I have experience enough to treat the subject scientifically.

“ If a man could be sure  
That his life would endure  
For a thousand long years as of yore.”

he could lay himself out for such abstruse studies; but at present I must confine myself to one of those changes in the taste of romance-reading mankind, which has occurred within my own knowledge, and has been somewhat puzzling to the fabricator of stories.

I remember quite well the time when long and minute descriptions of scenery, costume, armour, personal appearance—ay, and even character—were highly palatable to the reader. The exquisite pictures afforded by the poems and romances of Sir Walter Scott were the delight of intelligent minds. Men felt in reading them as if they were gazing at the glorious handiwork of a Claude or Poussin ; but we have changed all that. We hear from the lips of every little critic deep condemnations of long and wearisome descriptions, and every sort of stimulant, from blood and thunder to philosophical infidelity, is required to excite the public taste. A dozen throats cut in one chapter, five or six young ladies seduced by one villain, with a reasonable admixture of gambling, swindling,

drinking, and lying, form the best sauce to any story that can be told ; and although every now and then a work appears, which, like the great "Novel" of Sir Edward Lytton, commands attention by its intrinsic power, few books can be produced in which cayenne pepper, in some shape, does not overbalance all the other condiments.

Now, dear reader, this is a long, laborious, but not altogether unnecessary excuse for beginning the following work by a description. The description, however, must be given, for it is impossible for any man to form an accurate conception of how any actions were performed, unless he have some knowledge of where they took place. For instance, what might have been done on Salisbury Plain could not be enacted on the top of one of the Pyramids of Egypt ; and therefore it is that I am obliged to present a picture of the scene in which many of the most important events about to be detailed took place.

At the distance of about five-and-twenty miles from Paris—which, in the days of which I write, was a long distance, but is now abbreviated to a mere span—there stood an old French château.

It stands there still, for I have been in it, and have visited with some strange feelings many, though not all, of its various nooks and corners—spots where persons not unconnected with me lived and enjoyed, died or suffered. To call a

French château, of any period after the reign of Francis I., a building of any style of architecture would be absolutely ridiculous. The pepper-box style might be as appropriate as any other name, and certainly might have been applied to the building in question, which consisted principally of numerous little towers, scattered about without much regularity, and joined together by flat, straight pieces of building of an older date apparently than the turrets themselves. A good many similar old buildings are still to be seen in Switzerland, where the heavy snows afford some reason for the slated foolscap-looking, conical roofs with which the various towers are surmounted. The material is grey stone, the windows narrow and small, the rooms spacious, and for the most part floored with tiles, waxed, painted, and polished. On the lower floor were some fifteen different chambers of various shapes and sizes, from the oblong dining-hall, with its enormous fire-place, to the small cabinet richly ornamented with arabesques and paintings of flowers in the mode of about a century before. The outside of the house had somewhat of a gloomy appearance; but enough light and sunshine penetrated, even through these narrow windows, to give a gay, dry, and wholesome air to the rooms within. The motes danced in the slanting rays; and every hour saw a new pattern drawn on the floor by the lozenge-shaped panes of

the lead casements. Around the house extended what was called a park—very different indeed from the English park, where Nature is very little assisted by Art, but cut into long alleys, separated from each other by screens of the yoke elm, and filled during the spring and summer months with every variety of singing bird.

Many of the winged wanderers from other countries, the hoppoe, the oriel, the woodcock, the wild pigeon, the turtle dove, found refuge among those shades ; but from the moment when, in early February, the thrush took his stand on the naked top bough, and heralded with his sweet carol the approach of warmer days, till the robin closed the year with his song amidst the snow, those long alleys and deep glades were full of music of nature's own melodious making.

The house was not a very convenient one, except in certain parts, where some architectural skill had been displayed—for instance, where the grand staircase swept up in two great masses with wide landings at the top, showing a boldness of design and skill in execution seldom met with in modern country houses. The other parts of the dwelling were strangely disjoined and irregular ; and it sometimes happened that where two chambers were actually contiguous, it required a walk of nearly half round the house to reach the one from the other.



The furniture of the house bespoke not merely ease and wealth, but taste and refinement. Each room had at least two or three pictures in it, generally landscapes, though there were some very fine figure pieces by Italian artists; and here and there a little *étagère* was seen, with shelves displaying curious specimens of art or relics of the olden time. On the second floor, however, was a large gallery filled with pictures and busts, and next to it a small library. Beyond that was a large room having somewhat the appearance of a chapel, with several other chambers further on, and staircases going up and down, heaven knows where; for the ins and outs of that house were innumerable.

Such was the scene in which many of the events about to be recorded took place, and all that remains to be said upon this part of the subject is, that I have purposely abstained from giving anything like a romantic tinge to the description of a place which was, in reality, only an old French *château* of the seventeenth century, large, roomy, and incommodious, but peculiar and characteristic of the age.





## CHAPTER II.

### THE NEW TUTOR.

**I**N the park, of which we have spoken in the preceding chapter, and on the evening of a summer's day in 1647, a lady and gentleman in the prime of life walked slowly up and down, conversing gravely but not eagerly, while ever and anon he would pause for a moment, and trace with the point of his sheathed sword what seemed the plan of a town or a battle-field. Two handsomer people have seldom been seen; and Time had laid his hand lightly on the head of either, though a grey hair here and there showed that the passage of days had not been without its effect. The lady's face was beautifully fair, and not a line or wrinkle showed the work of age; but the face of her companion told tales of exposure and of strife. There was a deep scar upon his right cheek, and an indentation on his left brow, covered over with a black patch, as if the wound which had made it was barely healed. He was

active and vigorous, however, though somewhat spare in form ; and his face had more the expression of joy than cheerfulness ; for, although his eye lighted up when he looked down upon the beautiful countenance of his beloved wife, yet from time to time a look of sad and earnest thought would come like the shadow of a deep cloud upon him, and only pass away when the musical tones of her sweet voice sounded in his ear.

“Thank God, Edward,” she said, “thank God, though there is much to mourn, yet you are safe with your wife and children again. You know, my beloved, that, not for all the happiness a world could give, would I have withheld you from your duty to your King and your country ; but that duty has been done well and nobly, and though it has pleased God to frustrate your efforts, to disappoint your hopes, ay, and even to impair your fortune, Heaven has restored you to me in safety ; and, therefore, let us give thanks for what is granted, and not murmur because something is refused.”

“God forbid ! my Lucette,” said Sir Edward Langdale ; “but yet, if I am somewhat grave, forgive me. I feel all the joy of my return ; but when I think of the state of my country and my King, I cannot but feel bitter sorrow for the past, and sad misgivings for the future. What a strange

thing is fate! Buckley is gone, and all that the best fortune which could befall had given me in England; but here, by strange chances, more has been given than has been taken away; and, with a new country, I have found a better fate."

The words, though they were hopeful, seemed to throw both the speaker and her whom he addressed, into a fit of thought; and they walked on towards the old château I have described, without uttering a word for some moments; at length, however, the lady said, musingly,—

"Surely, they will never kill the King!"

Her husband shook his head.

"I cannot tell, my Lucette," he said, "but they have him totally in their power, and they have slain so many of the best and noblest of the land, that who shall say they will not carry their iniquity a step further? It was not believed when I was in England; and, indeed, the great body of the people seemed to regard the very idea with horror; but there are bold bad men among them who may even desire to compromise the rest beyond all return. They are affecting to treat with the King even now; but I cannot discover anything in their proceedings indicative of sincerity. The monarchy is gone—that is clear to me; and the life of his Majesty is at the disposal of traitors. I have very little hope, Lucette."

While they had been thus speaking, they had advanced near enough to the château to hear, through the open windows, some one singing, in a very sweet voice, and apparently with a great knowledge of music, as the science was understood in those days ; and both stopped to listen.

"Surely, that is not Lucy's voice," said the gentleman, pausing ; "if it be, it has fallen several notes since I was here."

"That is a man's voice, I think," answered Lucette. "It certainly is not Lucy. She cannot sing so well as that."

And, hurrying their pace, they entered the château. Proceeding straight forward past the foot of the great staircase, they turned into a room to the right, from which the sound seemed to proceed. It was evidently used as a music-room ; for various instruments of music were scattered about, and several of the curious old music books of those days were lying on tables, and even on chairs. Seated near the window, which was open, was a young man of about three-and-twenty years of age, dressed with exceeding plainness, but with a very great taste. His garb was of that beautiful form and arrangement which we see so frequently represented by the pencil of Vandyck. The collar, it is true, was of plain linen, as were also the turned-up wristbands, but they were cut into the most beautiful shapes, and every line of the gar-



ments which he wore seemed to flow into one another with an easy grace which made, as it were, the poetry of costume. The cloth of the coat was not fine, nor was it, as sometimes happened in that age, gaudy in colouring; but every hue was so blended that, to use what some people may consider contradictory language, harmony was produced by opposition.

One of the most wonderful things, among all the wonderful anomalies of this anomalous world, becomes apparent if we take a picture of Vandyck, put it by the side of one of the horse-hair bewigged gentlemen of the reign of Anne or George I., and compare them both, the one with the other, and the two with a living and moving human animal of the present day. How the mind of man could ever go on in a process of degradation such as to descend from the admirable forms displayed by the pencil of Vandyck and many who preceded him, to the stiff rigidity of John, Duke of Marlborough, or William, Duke of Cumberland, is at first sight perfectly inexplicable. But if my theory be correct, and costume be the great exponent of the character of the age, the change is easily accounted for. The French seem to have felt this continually, but not to have defined it. We have even given the name to certain collars used in the time of the first French Revolution, of *colliers à la guillotine*, from the facility which they afforded for

cutting a gentleman's head off without the trouble of unbuttoning them.

The young gentleman of whom we now speak was dressed in the complete habiliments of a cavalier of those times ; but all exceedingly plain—the lovelocks even were not wanting, but hung down upon his shoulders in magnificent bunches of curls, while the shorter hair over his forehead, by its natural wave, showed that no art had been used to produce the ringlets at the side.

On his knee was lying a Venetian mandolin, with which he had been accompanying his voice ; and his hand was still straying over the strings when the master and mistress of the mansion entered.

As soon as he perceived them, he rose, slim and almost delicate in form, took up his hat from the ground, and advancing with a slight degree of hesitation, said, in a low, sweet tone, and in the English language—

“I presume I have the honour of seeing Sir Edward Langdale.”

“The same, Sir,” said the other. “May I know whom I have the pleasure of welcoming to my house ? pray be seated.”

“This will explain, Sir,” said the young stranger, producing a letter, and handing it to him.

Sir Edward Langdale took it with a polite but somewhat cold aspect, and seated himself, again

waving the stranger to a chair. It was clear that the appearance of his visitor did not impress him with any great feelings of respect. His nature had been very much softened since his youth ; he had gained gentleness of heart ; the gentler, the finer portions of his nature had obtained room and nurture ; his Lucette had been all to him, and more than all that he had expected ; and the blooming boys and girls which had arisen around his footsteps, had awakened and developed the sweetest, holiest, most beautiful sympathies of our nature. But still Edward Langdale, in manner at least, was not soft. It is a curious fact, that those who are most truly tender can sometimes seem most hard ; he could sport with a child as if he were a child himself ; no true tale of sorrow met his ear in vain ; but the quick, sharp answer, the keen, stern inquiry, prompt decision, and the steady determined action afforded no previous promise of the gentler and kinder treatment which was sure to be produced by a worthy object. It is another curious fact that, in very many instances, disposition—I must not call it nature—is more frequently fundamentally affected by external influences, especially in youth, than mere manner. The water hollows the stone, while it leaves hardly a trace upon the sands ; and I am inclined to go a little further than the old axiom, that “habit is second nature,” and to believe that this second

nature is of a harder and firmer fabric than the first.

However that may be, all that could be said of Sir Edward Langdale's manner was, that it was coldly polite. There was no stateliness, no affectation of dignity, but there was no warmth—none of what the French call effusion. The young stranger appeared, however, not the least abashed; he seemed to expect no more, but seating himself with a very graceful inclination of the head to Lady Langdale, who was quitting the room, he waited in a still and easy position, while her husband read the letter brought to him.

What was in that letter will appear presently; but its immediate effect upon Sir Edward was strange. The cavalier rose from his chair, fixed his eyes upon the ground, not sternly but thoughtfully, and walked up and down the room two or three times without a word. Then suddenly stopping with a sort of start before the young stranger, he held out his hand to him, saying,

“Excuse me, Sir, I am glad to see you, though I may have seemed somewhat rude; but this letter proposes to me matters which I have never contemplated, but which must not be refused, in the circumstances which surround you. This is a very quiet home, Sir, a home of domestic tranquillity and affection, into which we have made it a point to let the world at large intrude itself but seldom,

My wife, full of high accomplishments, and happy in the task, can bestow upon my daughter such an education as no girl can receive but from her mother. Of my boys, one is too young for all but rudimental teaching ; another receives his education partly from myself, partly from the old man who dwells in that small house you see from the window. His military exercises have lately been greatly interrupted, I am sorry to say, by my absence from France in the unfortunate cause of a beloved Monarch. Young as he was, I would have taken him with me ; but I have no right to deprive a wife, who was every day likely to lose her husband, of a stay which might be most needful to her."

"There have been lads as young, as beloved, as precious," said the young stranger, in a grave but gentle tone, "who have fought in the same fields where you have fought, Sir Edward, and shared the same reverses that you have suffered. But I know," he continued, hastily, seeing a slight flush come upon Sir Edward Langdale's cheek, and his lip quiver as if for a reply, "but I know, at least I have been told, that you are peculiarly situated, that your lady is a French woman, her estate is greatly depending on the male heir ; and the devotion of your own life and service to his cause, was all that your monarch could desire, more, perhaps, than he could expect."



Edward Langdale eyed him from head to foot, with a thoughtful and almost an inquiring look.

"You seem well acquainted with these matters, Sir," he said, "and, it is probable from the contents of the letter you brought me, that some of your friends, if not yourself, have served his Majesty."

"My friends and my relations, both, have tried to serve him," answered the young man; "but we all know they have had little success. Indeed, those who try hardest, after their own fashion, generally meet with the least success, unless they will be convinced that a man who can see two miles has a wider view than a man who can only see one."

"If I understand you rightly," answered his companion, "you would imply that the King's best friends have not always been his most obedient subjects, his most faithful officers somewhat insubordinate soldiers. This is the fertile source of great disaster, Sir, and I heartily agree with you. My own rule has been to obey the orders I receive when they were given to me by my superior in command, and to follow my own judgment only when there was no one present who had a right to command me. But let us talk of other things. I find that you are a skilful musician."

The young gentleman smiled.

"A part of my life was passed in Italy, Sir Edward," said he, "the land of music, and indeed

of all the arts ; and it was not to be expected that my constitution could resist the infection."

"I did not know that art was a disease," said Sir Edward Langdale, "although, to say the truth, being master of no art myself, I am no great judge in such matters."

"I should judge the contrary," said the young man, pointing to some beautiful small pictures on the walls. "That group of children must be from the hand of Albano ; and that Guercino is a masterpiece. They were never chosen by one who has no knowledge of art."

"I have some finer than these," replied Sir Edward Langdale, warming with a subject of which he was fond. "I will show them to you by-and-by ; but in the meantime, all I can say, in answer to this letter, is, that I shall be happy to give you such protection and assistance as I can afford. In regard to my receiving you as tutor to my two younger children, as his Royal Highness Prince James requests, methinks it is a situation inferior to your abilities and your education ; might I not also say to your birth ?"

"I aspire to nothing higher," replied the young gentleman ; and then added, "it often happens, Sir Edward, that persons not humbly born, by accidental circumstances become proficient in many branches of learning, which others, apparently more favourably situated, never acquire all.

The necessity of labouring for one's bread, for instance—looked upon by the world in general as a great misfortune—is sometimes, on the contrary, the greatest of blessings. It gives health and strength to body and mind. It fosters and directs a just ambition, and it teaches a man to respect himself by giving him a knowledge of the powers within him. I am very poor, as probably the Duke has told you ; but that is not my fault. It may be my fault if I remain so ; and therefore I am resolved, even at my early age, to commence that honest exertion which is likely to be my course through life."

Sir Edward Langdale, as is very customary with men of his peculiar temperament, had the habit, when somewhat puzzled or desirous to think deeply, to rise suddenly and walk up and down the chamber or any other place where he might be at the time. He now took some ten or twelve turns before he made any answer, and then merely replied, "Well, Sir, well, it shall be as you desire. A room shall be provided for you immediately. There are plenty in this house."

"So I perceive," said the young man dryly.

"To-morrow the children shall begin their studies," said Sir Edward ; "and now let us transact the business part of the affair, and see what you require as compensation for the trouble you are going to undertake."

A conversation of five minutes settled all that referred to salary, and then calling for a servant, the master of the house led his young companion to a room on the lower story of the left wing, to which he ordered the good old man, Pierrot, to bring the stranger's baggage.

"What am I to do with the horse, Sir?" demanded Pierrot.

"Put him in the stable, of course," replied his master; and Pierrot retired and shut the door; but when, at the end of some five minutes, Sir Edward came out, leaving the young man behind him, he found his old follower still standing in the passage.

"His luggage is small enough," said Pierrot, stepping up to his master with an air of mystery. "Only two saddle-bags."

"Well, Pierrot, when you first knew me, I had not much more,"

"But the horse, the horse!" exclaimed Pierrot; "it is as fine a charger as was ever crossed by man."





## CHAPTER III.

### THE TABLE DE PIERRE.



FEW days, a few hours, often comprises all that really merits the name of a man's lifetime ; and then again there are pauses of months, perhaps years, in which little is done, said, or thought, which deserves even the record of memory. But there are periods which, without any apparent action, prepare the way for more important things. I must not call them mixed periods ; for they are so tranquil and quiet, so completely without the agitation of feeling and the energy of deed, that they are often forgotten afterwards, and the dull mind of man fails to perceive what important influence they have had upon his future fate.

One of these periods succeeded the few little incidents we have last noticed in the château of Belaye. All matters went on as they had done before. The young stranger's arrival and admission into the family had made hardly a perceptible

change ; and his time was so taken up with the instructions he had undertaken to give, and with private studies of his own, that he saw little of the lord and lady of the mansion, except during the hours of meals.

Let us, however, give a picture of the family circle round the board on one of these occasions, as some of the personages there gathered together will have to appear upon the scene again hereafter.

With Sir Edward Langdale the reader is already acquainted, and also with his sweet wife, Lucette, hardly less lovely, though with a different sort of loveliness, than when she fled from Rochelle with him who is now her husband. In addition to these were the eldest daughter and the eldest son of the house—the first a young girl of some seventeen years of age, very like her mother in feature and expression, but with her father's dark hair and long black eyelashes. The eldest son was a fine lad of about sixteen, fair as his mother, and remarkably handsome, but with a somewhat delicate look and slender form. He was too tall, perhaps, for his age ; and Sir Edward would sometimes gaze at him with a feeling of anxiety regarding his future health, while his mother's heart would sink at what she thought the signs of premature decay. Besides these two, were two other rosy and robust children of nine and ten years of age, whom we may not

pause to describe, as we must hurry on to more active scenes.

The seventh person at that table was the young stranger, to whom we must now give a name, and it had better be that by which he was known in the family, namely, "Master Bernard Marsh." With the two younger children, towards whom he now acted in the capacity of tutor, he had rapidly ingratiated himself ; and they would cling to him with almost brotherly affection whenever he bestowed upon them a few minutes out of the hour of study. This was rare, however, for he did not show himself disposed to mingle much with the family, retiring commonly to his own chamber as soon as the lessons were over, and taking little or no exercise except during one hour of the autumnal evenings, when he would seek out one of the most solitary alleys of the park, and there pace up and down, apparently buried in deep thought. Sometimes, at the dinner-table, he would converse fluently with Sir Edward Langdale upon literature and art, and with young Henry Langdale he would jest gaily ; but with Lady Langdale and her eldest daughter his conversation was confined to a few words of common courtesy when they met and when they parted. Indeed, to say sooth, the fair Lucy might have felt a little piqued with his utter indifference to her beauty, her grace and her accomplishments, had she not been educated in so

much seclusion that she was ignorant and innocent of all the various arts and coquetry of the day. As it was, she thought him a very common place young man, handsome, beyond doubt, and learned, but very cold and somewhat shy. Lady Langdale might see a little deeper—and Sir Edward Langdale certainly did, for he had made the young man's character a study from the first moment he had entered the family, and thought he perceived underneath his cold manner traits very different from those which appeared upon the surface. At first, indeed, he had been induced to think him a little frivolous—to judge that his taste for the arts, and especially for music, had softened him and rendered him effeminate ; but every now and then, across his ordinarily calm demeanour, came a flash of vigorous thought which spoke a mind of no small power and energy.

It may be remembered that when the young gentleman first appeared at the château he had a four-footed friend with him, which Pierrot La Grange had pronounced as fine a charger as ever man bestrode ; but Master Bernard never mounted him, though he would often walk into the stable, pat his neck, and rub his hand gently over two curious looking scars, on each of the good beast's fore legs. The horse seemed very fond of him, however, and the moment his step sounded in the stable, the ears would be raised, and the head



turned, and a short neigh of pleasure would welcome his young master.

It is a very dangerous thing in this good world in which we live to have any small peculiarities. Great eccentricities—oddities of a remarkable character, as some old authoress said, “set us in our easy chair for life ;” but beware of anything that smacks of mystery ; it sets that blind and stupid, but staunch and persevering dog, Curiosity, yelping at your heels : it is the scent of the deer upon the grass, and were you the pet fawn of the hound’s master, that same dog would have his fangs in your flank before he gave over the chase. Now Master Bernard afforded matter for much speculation in the château of Belaye. His quiet and solitary habits, his accomplishments—for even the servants soon found out he was highly accomplished—made him the object of comment and observation ; and then there was that wonderful fact that nobody knew who he was, or whence he came. I refer of course to the domestics and retainers of the house ; but even Sir Edward Langdale himself was not without a certain degree of—what shall I call it ? Not curiosity, for it had none of the vulgar portion of that very vulgar propensity ; but of puzzle. He never inquired why the young man did this or that, what were the motives for his absenting himself continually from the family circle where he was treated with

kindness and courtesy ; he asked no questions as to the past, the present, or the future ; but he did wonder at much that he saw, and would have been glad of further explanations. It is true that he had received a letter by the young man's hands from the second son of his sovereign, which might well repress anything like indiscreet curiosity ; and there were events always taking place in France which—though he was resolved to take no share in them—occupied much of his attention ; but he remarked with regret that his new companion neglected all healthful exercise, that the cheek became paler, the eye more anxious, and that the song heard occasionally from the little chamber in the left wing was less frequent, and generally of a more melancholy tone. A feeling of undefined sympathy took possession of him, and, whereas at first he had felt that sort of superiority which trenches on contempt, often experienced by men of action and energy for men of thought and fancy, he began to acquire an interest in the young man nearly allied to friendship.

One day towards the end of September, on a bright and beautiful morning, the whole party were just concluding their breakfast, when Sir Edward suddenly burst forth with the words, "Children, this is a remarkable day in my life, and we will have a holiday. Master Bernard, you want more exercise ; come out and join us in a long ride, for

we are going through the forest to the table of stone, where our ancient Kings of France used sometimes to hold their *cours plenières* ; and there we will have our dinner and fancy ourselves as good as Peer or Paladin."

The young gentleman looked down for an instant and thought ; and then replied,

"Well, sir, I am at your command ; I presume that the party will be small, for, to say truth, I am not much fitted for society."

"None but ourselves," replied Sir Edward ; and then he added, in rather a significant tone, "there is no chance of our meeting any one ; for I imagine that since the days of Childebert, not ten persons have passed along that road in four-and-twenty hours. What horse will you ride ?"

"My own, Sir," replied the young man.

"He has not been out for weeks," replied Sir Edward, "and it might be well to have him exercised before you ride him."

The young man smiled slightly, saying,

"He knows me well, Sir, and is not vicious."

In little more than an hour, horses for all the party were before the gates. Lady Langdale and her daughter were speedily mounted, and Sir Edward and the lads had their feet in the stirrups ; but the fine bay charger of Master Bernard was fretting and prancing in the hands of two grooms, who could hardly restrain him, now pawing the

ground, now rearing, as if the fiery spirit long unexercised could hardly be restrained. The young man approached his side, while the eye of Sir Edward Langdale, as that of an experienced cavalier, was fixed upon him, perhaps in some doubt, perhaps with a little anxiety. But there was only one word and one movement.

“Stand!” and with one vault, and without ever touching the stirrup, Bernard Marsh was in the saddle, and as erect as a statue. The horse dashed forward as if to get before all the rest; but after one wild shake of the head and tug at the bridle, he was completely under command, and gentle as a lamb.

The ride was a very beautiful one of some eight or ten miles in length, through a country which could not be called hilly, but which undulated and varied at every step, now passing through rich vineyards and fields, now cutting across one of those little woods which diversify that part of France, now rising a gentle eminence from which a wide extending view of the surrounding scenery might be obtained, now sinking into a deep dell, along the bottom of which ran a clear and sparkling stream. During the first part of the way, the aspect of all things was cheerful and lively. The peasantry were working in the fields, and cheering their labours with a song; the trees were full of birds making the air melodious with the last carols

of the year, and the large and beautiful butterflies where still abroad, ending their brief existence in the sobered sunshine of the early autumn.

Every passion is infectious, or rather there is that natural tendency to sympathy in the mind of man, that sixty centuries of crime and suffering have not been able to extinguish the feelings of brotherhood with all things which God implanted originally in the human heart. To laugh with those who laugh, to weep with those who weep, is the natural tendency of every one ; and we are inclined to take part in all that is joyous ; if it be but the happiness of beasts that perish, or the gay aspect of even an inanimate scene. The mind is as it were a mirror reflecting the objects around it, and taking from all a colouring not its own. The whole party became merry, and even Master Bernard himself shook off the reserve and gravity of his ordinary demeanour, and laughed and chatted with a cheerful countenance and an open heart.

At the end of five or six miles, however, the road descended slowly and gradually showing a wide scene of undulating forest ground beyond. The rows of tall walnut trees which had hitherto bordered the path on either side became broken, and then ceased ; the cultivated fields ended, the house of the farmer and the cabin of the labourer disappeared, great oaks and horse chestnuts took

the place of the fruit tree and the vine, till suddenly taking a sharp turn and an abrupt descent, the whole party found themselves in the forest of Bourg, near the spot where a forester's cottage stood, with a large clear well of beautiful water by its side. The old man himself was sitting at his door, carving a sundial on a stick, and whistling sweetly some long-forgotten tune, taking hardly any notice of the cavalcade, whose horses' feet he must have heard. The whole party, however, stopped to let their beasts drink, and Sir Edward Langdale rode up to the old man, saying,

"Why, Robin, you seem to have forgotten me."

The forester started up the moment he heard his voice, exclaiming,

"God bless me, monseigneur"—everybody was monseigneur with the peasantry in those days—"why, I thought that you were in foreign lands, fighting for the good King of England. Some one told me so, I am sure, and I have not seen you for this two years."

"I have come back, good Robin," said Sir Edward, "and trust to spend some peaceful days with you yet; but what makes you look grave and desponding, good man? You were hanging down your head when we came up, as if you were resolved not to see us."

"The times are bad, Sir," said Robin, "and many a person passes by here now-a-days whom

it is not safe to see. Why, it is not three hours since there was a whole party of them killed one of the King's deer within sight of the cottage door. They would not have dared to do that in the old King's reign, when the great Cardinal was living. But I can do nothing now to stop them. In those times I could bring up ten men with the blast of a horn ; but the men get no pay, so they won't stay under this new Cardinal and this little boy."

"Well, we have not come to hunt the King's deer," replied Sir Edward ; "but merely to take our dinner at the *Table de Pierre*. It is all safe up there, I suppose."

"Oh, ay," replied the forester, "the rogues have been gone a couple of hours, each man carrying a bloody quarter behind him, and they are not likely to come back very soon ; besides you have plenty of people with you."

Now the plenty of people of whom good Robin spoke, consisted only of Sir Edward Langdale and his son, Master Bernard Marsh, two mounted grooms, and a third leading a pack-horse for the conveyance of their provisions ; these, together with the ladies and the younger children, formed a tolerably large cavalcade ; but no one felt any fear, and the news that there were some rogues in the forest did not startle any one. Indeed, some years before, there would have been no need of alarm ;

but times were a good deal changed since Sir Edward Langdale had last left the shores of France for England. The feeble, cunning, but successful rule of Cardinal Mazarin, had brought about great disorders in the country ; the civil wars of the Fronde had begun, and many parts of the land, as well as the immediate neighbourhood of the court, were greatly disturbed both by the contending factions, and by that general license which is sure to follow ill-established power. What the poet calls "the ancient rule—the good old plan" was very largely adopted ; and the strong hand, I fear, was sometimes too often felt in various parts of France.

However, Sir Edward and his party rode gaily on, forgetting in a few minutes all about the gentlemen who had been helping themselves to the King's venison, and talking about the magnitude of the old oaks (some of which they stopped to measure) ; the beauty of the sparkling stream, which they crossed at least a dozen times ; and the loveliness of the scene in general, whether in those deep misty glades which the eye could hardly penetrate, or the ever dancing light and shade which streamed through the leaves and branches chequering their path as with a curiously varied pavement. At the end of about two miles, or two miles and a half, a little, even lawn in the very heart of the wood opened before them ; and there, shaded by the long branches, stood the table of



stone, a long, flat slab, some sixteen feet in length, by perhaps eight in width, supported by four smaller stones at the four corners. Perhaps it was a druidical monument originally ; but tradition said that there the feudal lords of the soil, and even the Kings of France themselves, had held their *cours plenières*, and judged their subjects, or revelled with their vassals. The meal upon the present occasion was destined probably to be a more moderate one than those old times had seen ; but yet it was plentiful and gay ; and care and thought, and probably memory and regret, were for the time forgotten. With that common revulsion of feeling which so frequently drives men into excess, the gayest perhaps of the whole party was the thoughtful and somewhat gloomy Master Bernard Marsh. He laughed, he jested, he talked gaily with Lady Langdale and Lucy ; he gathered the wild autumn flowers with the boys, and ran after the gaudy butterflies. He seemed almost a child himself, and probably in the midst of a sad and laborious life, he was determined to have one day at least of bright and unmingled enjoyment.

Thus ran by the hours till towards four o'clock, with the servants sitting around and enjoying themselves as much as their masters, when Sir Edward Langdale thought that it was nearly time to return to the château. Then, as they lingered for a few minutes, Lady Langdale asked

Master Bernard if he would not give them a parting song. They knew he could sing beautifully, she said, for they had heard him accidentally more than once. He answered with a smile, that perhaps he sang better when he did not know that anyone was listening to him. He complied, however, at once, without affectation, singing somewhat after the following manner :

## THE DYING SOLDIER'S LAMENT.

## I.

Where is the love o'er childhood's slumber bending,  
While drops the tear from the maternal eye,  
Prophetic fear with heaven-born hope still blending,  
Chastening proud pleasure with the timid sigh ;  
Where is the love ?

Where is the love, more warm but less enduring,  
That twines youth's brow with coronals of flowers,  
While hope stands by, deluded hearts assuring  
A long expanse of bright and sunny hours :  
Where is the love ?

## III.

Where is that love, while sad and mangled lying  
On the dark battle-field my limbs are cast,  
And my crushed heart for long gone moments sighing,  
Turns faintly back unto the happy past ;  
Where is that love ?

## IV.

Where is that love ? In Heaven, with those who bore it,  
Who long have left me on this earth alone.  
Sweet spirits ! in your blessed mansions store it,  
For I am coming quick to claim mine own.  
There is that love.

The voice was exquisitely sweet, the science was perfect, so far as the science of music had advanced in that day; and none hung upon the song more profoundly occupied than Lucy Langdale, whose ear and taste were as fine and delicate as those of her mother.

Sir Edward, moved as he always was by music, sat with his eyes fixed upon the table of stone, while the servants were removing the various implements which had been used at their simple dinner, when suddenly a slight cry from Lady Langdale, and the touch of her hand upon his arm, made him raise his eyes. The first sight he saw was the gleam of some half-dozen carbines pointed at his party from amongst the trees just opposite, and before he had time to draw his sword, a number of men from behind him had rushed down and were pinioning his arms with the horses' bridles. The gentlemen with the carbines then came down from the opposite side, with no very formidable gestures, for they were shouting with laughter, but in sufficient numbers to make all opposition fruitless. A scene of confusion and disarray followed, which can hardly be described. The strangers were for the most part masked or otherwise disguised; and it was difficult to discover either by their apparel or their manner whether the attack had been made by a party of marauders, or whether the whole affair was merely

a bad joke. They laughed, they jested, according to the light spirit of the times and the country; and certainly their language was curiously and, in some degree, artificially refined; but their garments were not a little tattered, and they made no scruple of tying the servants, who had been overpowered in a moment, or of bestowing two or three good buffets upon Pierrot La Grange, who was the only person that offered anything like serious resistance.

"We hope you have dined well, Sir," said a gentleman with a blue scarf, addressing Sir Edward Langdale, with a low and ceremonious bow; "we would not have interrupted you at your meal, seeing that we ourselves are as full of good venison as we can hold, but we are exceedingly thirsty, having had nothing to drink but a small quantity of a pure and doubtless very salubrious beverage, called water, which is a drink that none of us are much accustomed to. You will invite us I know to partake of your wine, and therefore, without waiting for ceremony, we will help ourselves;" and thus saying, he filled up a brimming glassful from some bottles which were still on the table, and was followed by most of his companions.

"Madame, be not the least alarmed," said another, addressing Lady Langdale, "we are the most civilized people upon the face of the earth. We may perhaps have to disencumber you of some

of those worldly goods which sadly impede our poor humanity in the way to grace, but we know the charitable disposition of our friends so well that we do not doubt they will gladly contribute a small sum to help a body of poor gentlemen on their way home ; for upon my life and soul I don't think amongst us all there is a crown piece to buy any one of us a new cravat."

"Gentlemen," said Sir Edward Langdale, "this bantering is all very well ; but as we must also find our way home, you would oblige me if you would come to the point. You have us in your power, and presuming that it is our money that you seek, I would willingly give you my purse if I could put my hand into my pocket. If you choose, however, to unloose me you shall have it, as resistance is quite in vain with such a disparity of numbers."

"Of course it is, Sir Edward," said the personage in the blue scarf, "but the fact is we want to raise a loan, much in the same way that our ancient monarch used to do, by very gentle compulsion. Your hands, therefore, shall be untied, though we could help ourselves for that matter ; but in truth we shall require our bridles. Therefore, have the kindness politely and civilly to put down your purse upon the table. Jean, untie the good knight's arms."

"With infinite pleasure, monseigneur," replied

the man whom he addressed, and the leather strap was immediately taken from Sir Edward's arms. While the marauders, or whoever they were, were thickly mingling with Sir Edward's party, paying courtly compliments to Lady Langdale, uttered with every external sign of courtesy, yet in a somewhat jesting tone, Sir Edward took his purse from his pocket and laid it gravely on the table, saying, "Help yourselves, gentlemen."

The man in the blue scarf deliberately poured out the money and counted it. "Only a hundred and ten crowns," he said; "is that all? that will not make ten crowns a head to us."

"All I have, upon my word," replied Sir Edward.

"I would feign borrow that diamond ring upon your finger," rejoined the stranger. "The brilliants are large and apparently of a very fine water."

"You must take it if you will, Sir," said Sir Edward, in a very grave tone, "but you might nearly as well take my life. That ring was given me by my King, on the night after a successful battle; and I thought to have carried it with me to my grave."

"Nevertheless, I must borrow it, Sir," replied the stranger, "at least, for a time; and although you may think I am joking, I will add this much: It shall be returned to you perfectly safe within a few weeks, if I live." He spoke in a graver and

more courteous tone, and Sir Edward Langdale immediately took the ring from his finger and laid it on the table beside the money. Of course a great deal of noise and confusion had been going on in the little arena where the conversation had taken place, but we must recollect that those were days in which events were not extraordinary that would now seem extravagant. The wars of the great rebellion in England produced not a few of these strange doings ; but still more were enacted in France during the wars of the Fronde, which were then, perhaps, at their height. Thus, levity supplied the place of earnestness ; religion was not even a pretence, and every conceivable sort of wildness and rashness was displayed by every party. Thus men's minds were habituated to scenes and circumstances which at other times would have produced surprise and consternation ; and very little astonishment was felt at anything that was strange and daring, from whatever quarter it came.

Nevertheless, all was confusion, as may well be supposed, when a body of some thirteen or fourteen armed men intruded themselves with such doubtful intentions upon a little social party like that of Sir Edward Langdale's. Each one was separated from the other ; the only one who had his hands free on the one side was Sir Edward himself, and seven or eight men with carbines in their hands kept the

others apart, under that moral compulsion which proceeds from powder and ball, and others were continually passing backwards and forwards, giving orders, bringing up horses, and storing up silver goblets and other convertible articles in havresacs and such receptacles.

A space of perhaps less than ten minutes concluded the whole ; and then the gentleman in the blue scarf raised his hat with the air of a prince, saying, " Sir Edward, we are sorry to be obliged to put you under some degree of compulsion, but, as you are aware, necessity has no law. We leave you at liberty in five minutes to untie your companions. I need hardly tell you that with your force and ours, and with the distance between you and your resources which exists, any attempt at pursuit would be in vain. You will hear from me again, when anything that now seems wrong will be made right. Mount, gentlemen, mount ! never mind your curb reins ; you can ride for once upon the snaffle."

Thus saying, he flung himself upon a very fine horse which stood by, and galloped away at the head of his party.

It must not be said that Sir Edward Langdale waited the five minutes prescribed ere he proceeded to unloose every one of the party ; and then, with an air of anxiety, and even trepidation, which was unusual with him, ran his eye rapidly



from face to face, exclaiming, in a tone difficult to describe, "Where is Lucy—where is Lucy?"

Every one looked round ; and then it was found that two of the party were missing. Lucy Langdale and Master Bernard Marsh were no longer amongst them.





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE RESCUE.

**N**IGHT was falling fast, and the party of horsemen rode on at a quick pace, without ever drawing a rein. They went in somewhat military array, the man in the blue scarf and another well-dressed cavalier leading the way. Behind them came a party of four, with a young lady in the midst, on whom two of the horsemen seemed to bestow much care and attention, one of them holding the bridle and the other steadying her in the saddle, where the inequalities of the road, or the rapid rate at which they were proceeding, rendered her seat insecure. At the same time they continued to address her in words of comfort and assurance, telling her that no harm was intended her, that she would be perfectly well treated, and that a lady of the highest rank was awaiting to receive her with feelings of the utmost kindness and affection.

The poor girl replied not, seeming dismayed,

and totally overwhelmed with her situation ; but in the meantime a conversation was going on between the two personages at the head of the troop, of which she was the unconscious object.

"I don't like it at all," said the man in the blue scarf ; "you had no business to do this. It is wrong in every respect ; it must more or less delay us in our efforts to get back into the city, if it does not frustrate us entirely. Then, again, how is the matter to be explained, when the whole is investigated, as it certainly will be?"

"How are your exploits to be explained, my lord?" asked the other, with a laugh ; "although great allowance will be made, doubtless, for your high rank, yet a Prince of the blood royal turning cut-purse is not easily accounted for."

"That will be explained in a moment," replied the other. "Cut off from the city with my small party, without a sou in our pockets, and obliged to find our way back somehow, money was absolutely necessary. Of course I intend to return it to the man as soon as I get to Paris."

"Well, well, you wanted the money," replied the other, "and I wanted the girl. Madame de Chevreuse may send her back again if she likes. All I know is that I promised to bring her, if I could catch her, though one of the boys would have done as well, only they stuck so close to their mother there was no separating them,"

“And, of course, you expect payment of some kind,” said his companion.

“I hope for it, of the sweetest kind,” replied the other, with a gay laugh ; “but, at all events, there is no use in talking about the matter any more. We have got the girl, and must keep her ; for I suppose your Highness is too gallant to turn her loose in these woods, even if I were inclined to suffer it.”

His companion seemed, however, by no means satisfied, and rode sullenly on in silence, till they had quitted the forest at a point some eight miles distant from the spot at which Sir Edward Langdale and his party had entered it. At the distance of about a mile farther, where a pleasant little shady dell received the waters of the river which we have already mentioned, appeared a small hamlet, with a gothic church on one side of the road and two or three houses on the other ; and here one of the party proposed to stop for a few minutes and let the horses drink.

The light had not yet faded from the sky, and the clouds were still rosy with the sunset, so that when the gentleman in the blue scarf raised his eyes towards the slope which the road ascended passing between the houses and the church, he could see distinctly two carts drawn up across the highway, with some bundles of faggots and poles joining either end of this unexpected barricade to

the houses on one side and the wall of the church on the other.

"Halloo! what is here?" he exclaimed; and after gazing for an instant, he added, turning sharply to his companion, "see what a scrape you have got us into! There are a number of fellows behind those carts, and more in the churchyard. They are well armed, too. Don't you see the gleam?"

"Awkward enough," replied the other, "but I had nothing to do with it. Most likely some of the Prince's men come in pursuit of us."

"I don't know that," replied the other, "I don't think it. Some military man must be at the head of it, that is clear; but I think we shall find—Stay! who is this coming forward?"

As he spoke, a man, apparently light and young, leaped the churchyard wall, and advanced towards the party in the road, with a drawn sword in one hand, held loosely by the blade, and one of the large horse-pistols of the day in the other. He walked with an easy and deliberate air, as if he were merely taking a morning stroll, but still continued to advance towards the man in the blue scarf. As soon as he had come within five or six paces, so that his features could be discerned, the voice of Lucy Langdale was heard exclaiming,—

"Oh, Master Bernard, help me, help me!

These men are dragging me away, Heaven knows whither."

"They will not drag you any farther," replied Bernard Marsh, in a cool tone, and then added, turning to the leader of the party, "Sir, you are to set this young lady immediately free. There is no use of making any struggle about it, for I have three times your number on the road before you, and Sir Edward Langdale and his men are not half a mile behind you."

"And who the devil are you, Sir?" demanded the man in the blue scarf, taking off his mask; "and how dare you stop a Prince of the blood in this manner?"

"I am the devil of nobody, Sir," answered the young man in the same calm tone, "but a gentleman of as good blood as any in the land. I know you, Monsieur le Duc de L——, and that you are what you state; but as for daring, I dare just as readily fire this pistol right into your face, as I dare fire it into the head of a spavined horse, when I find you engaged in such illegal and unworthy enterprises."

"May the devil seize you, Breteuil!" said the Duke, turning to his companion, "I told you how all this would end."

"It is not ended yet," answered the other.

"No, gentlemen," said Bernard Marsh, "it is not; but, if you will take my advice you, will end

it as soon as possible, for I hear Sir Edward's horses coming over the hill ; and if he arrive, I shall have no power to make you the proposal I now do out of consideration for some of the members of the noble Duke's family, who have shown me kindness on former occasions. It is this, that you instantly put the young lady's bridle in my hand, and ride on as fast as you can go. I will order the barricade to be opened before you, and hope to have sufficient influence with Sir Edward, to induce him not to pursue you. Only take my counsel, and the next time you feel inclined to carry off a young lady, who, I presume, is an heiress, do not lead her within two miles of her father's house. If you measure a bow and a string, you will always find the string the shortest."

"Ventre saint gris !" exclaimed the man who had been called Breteuil, "you are a mighty cool personage. I should like to know your name."

"Nonsense, nonsense !" cried the Duke, hearing the sound of horses' feet coming rapidly along the road, "give the young lady up to him instantly, and come on. We have your word that we shall pass safe, Sir ?"

"You have, if you make haste," replied Bernard Marsh, "but if you wrangle till Sir Edward Langdale comes up, I imagine you will be any-

thing but safe ; and the road is not very long from here to the Bastille."

As he spoke, he passed the two leaders, and laid his hand on Lucy's bridle rein, adding, "be not afraid, my dear young lady. This will all pass quietly ; these gentlemen have no choice."

"Come on with us, Sir, and tell the men to open the carts," said one of the men who had been riding by Lucy's side, "I would willingly teach you a lesson that you would not easily forget, stripling."

"Perhaps you might receive one," replied Bernard Marsh, with a laugh ; "at all events, I shall be glad to give you instruction whenever you want it ;" and then he added in a stern tone, as the man seemed inclined to linger, "ride on this instant, Sir, or worse will come of it."

The whole party then advanced along the road, Bernard following, calmly leading Lucy's horse, and speaking to her in quiet and kindly tones. At the barricade, the Duke de L—— and his companions saw that they had been in a much more perilous condition than they imagined ; for full thirty men, all carrying fire-arms, were assembled either behind the carts or in the churchyard, and others were seen running down the road at full speed, as men too late at a general meeting. One word from Bernard Marsh, however, caused a part of the barrier to be removed ; but as the



men behind still stood shoulder to shoulder, he added, in a voice of command,—

"Let these gentlemen pass the young lady is here, quite safe. Fall back, my men! I have promised them security."

He was obeyed at once; but evidently with reluctance, and one of the men ventured to say,—

"Ah, Master Bernard, if we might but have given them one volley!"

"Would you kill your young lady, Jaques?" answered the other reproachfully.

"You are right, Sir, you are right," replied the other, "some of us might have hit her in this dull light."

"Here comes your master," said Bernard Marsh, "these gentlemen have only got off in time;" and making a sign to one of the men in the rear, he whispered a word to him, which seemed to have the effect of instantly sending away some five or six of the party.

"Ah, Master Bernard, how can I ever thank you?" said Lucy laying her hand upon his as it rested on the pommel of her saddle.

"No thanks are needed, dear young lady," he answered. "It only required some sharp riding and some knowledge of the roads. I saw these men at the beginning separate you farther and farther from your mother, and soon divined that they had some object. My horse was ready behind the trees, and,

once on his back, no horse in all France could catch me before I reached the château. I easily slipped away in the confusion, gathered some of the servants and tenants together, left word for the rest to follow, and came on here, where I knew these people must pass if they took the way to Paris, as I had reason to believe they would."

"But how have you such a knowledge of the roads?" said Lucy: "you never quit the park."

Bernard did not give her a direct answer, but said in a gay tone,—

"Here comes your father. You must explain all to him, or he may think I have been trying to run away with you myself."

As he spoke, Sir Edward Langdale, with several servants, came up at full speed; and in a moment Lucy was off her horse and in his arms.

"Oh, father," she cried, "I thought I should never see you or my mother again; and I should not, if it had not been for the courage and kindness of Master Bernard, who cut off those wretched men here——"

"I know, dear girl," said Sir Edward. "Old Robin told me the message he left for me, and I easily conceived his plan, which I must say," he added, somewhat dropping his voice, "was more that of a general than that of a tutor."

"There is a gentleman among them, Sir Edward," said Bernard, "who wants a lesson, which I must

give him. He is an old acquaintance of mine, and I am very willing to oblige him, especially in the exercise of my proper functions. But I am very glad Mademoiselle Lucy has been saved a longer ride. She has had a longer one than she counted upon. Had we not better return to the château, and send these good people back?"

The proposal was readily agreed to; Master Bernard's fine horse was soon brought forth from the churchyard; the peasantry and the servants took their way homeward; and the usual libations of good wine were poured forth to celebrate the little triumph.

We must pass over the joy of Lady Langdale and the younger children at the recovery of Lucy; but, of course, the evening was rather a happy one. Master Bernard, indeed, was about to retire almost immediately after he reached the château, with the same grave face he usually wore; but Sir Edward besought him to stay. Lady Langdale playfully commanded him to do so, and Lucy exclaimed warmly, but timidly,—

"Oh, pray stay, Master Bernard, and pass the evening with us. I shall hardly think myself safe if you are away."

"You have much better protectors than I am, dear young lady," replied Bernard Marsh, raising his look to the deep, dark eyes that were gazing upon him; "but what cavalier can refuse a lady's

commands?" and he bowed gracefully to Lady Langdale.

Two or three hours were spent, perhaps more pleasantly than any which had passed since Bernard's arrival at Belaye. The events of the day were discussed with frankness, and even cheerfulness, though a certain degree of thoughtful care might be seen upon Lady Langdale's face; and once she remarked,—

"You say, Lucy, you heard Madame de Chevreuse's name mentioned. Will that woman never cease persecuting me?"

"I should think she had enough to occupy her in all the intrigues regarding her daughter's marriage," said Bernard Marsh, and in a gay tone he gave a slight sketch of all the wild, frivolous, but dangerous complications which were going on in the court of the capital of France. Sir Edward Langdale remained silent; the conversation soon turned into other channels; Bernard Marsh played upon the lute and sang a gayer song than he had given the party in the morning, and the evening ended with strange feelings in many hearts.

When Lady Langdale rose and left the room with her daughter and the younger children, Bernard Marsh was about to retire also; but Sir Edward stopped him, holding out his hand and saying,—

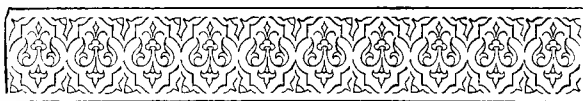
"I owe you an inappreciable debt; but it is not

of this I want to speak, Master Bernard. You are not what you seem ;—yet far be it from me to intrude into your confidence. However, thus much I may say. These men who played us so foul a trick this evening, are evidently of the highest rank. You spoke of giving one of them a lesson. If I understand you right, you will need some one to accompany you ; and I hope you will ask no one but myself.”

“Oh, no, Sir Edward,” replied Master Bernard, “if the man falls in my way, I may chastise him ; but it is not worth my while or yours to risk our lives in a pitiful quarrel with a miserable varlet. Your life, my dear sir, is most valuable to your King and to your country. Unhappily, the time for serving your reigning King is past for the present. It may come again—if not for him, for his successor ; for I will own I have great fears. Reserve yourself for that time, Sir ; and when it does come, count upon me as one of your most devoted followers. At present, neither of us can do anything.”

He spoke in the tone of a Prince ; and, quietly pressing Sir Edward’s hand, he left the room.





## CHAPTER V.

### THE OMELET.

**S**IR EDWARD LANGDALE kept up his habit of early rising—and as he dressed himself on the morning after the little adventure of the Table de Pierre, he called to mind various circumstances which had occurred during the preceding evening, and resolved to propound several questions to Master Bernard Marsh which he had hitherto neglected to ask. The principal of these was, why that young gentleman had suffered the men who attempted to carry off Lucy to depart in peace, when he had them in reality completely in his power. That there was some good reason for this conduct he did not doubt, but he wished for a full explanation; and, indeed, his curiosity had been so much excited by some points in the young gentleman's conduct, that he hardly felt inclined to let mere courtesy restrain him any longer from inquiring into the real character of his guest.

But if Sir Edward rose early, there was another who had risen earlier. Master Bernard Marsh was gone. A note was put into Sir Edward's hand, merely informing him that business of urgent importance required Master Marsh's absence for a few days, but that he would return as soon as possible. The latter assurance was confirmed by the fact that the youth's saddle-bags, and much of his little store of apparel had been left in his room; and Sir Edward was obliged to wait in ignorance of much that had taken place.

In the meantime, however, it may be as well to follow the course of Master Bernard Marsh after he left the gates of the château about break of day. At first he rode alone, quietly patting the neck of his fine charger, and talking to him as if the animal could understand and answer; but, before he had gone a mile beyond the little hamlet where the barricade had been erected, two men on horseback rode up and joined him.

"Well, Archibald," said the young gentleman, returning their respectful salutation, "have you gained any news?"

"They certainly went towards Paris, Sir," replied the man, "but I think you will most probably find them somewhere about Gien or Montargis; for they say there is likely to be a battle soon in that quarter; and of course they will be there."

"I don't know that," replied Master Bernard,

dryly ; and rode on upon the road towards Paris, without further conversation. The two men followed at a quick but not very hasty pace, and stopped for a few minutes to refresh the horses or to make some inquiries at a roadside inn. The result of these inquiries seemed a change of purpose ; for when still some twenty miles distant from Paris, the young gentleman and his two companions took a road to the right, which led into that fine country now known as the department of the Seine and Loire. On this they rode forward, with but one halt, till night-fall, and then quartered themselves at a small inn in the suburbs of the little town of Jargeau ; where the wine is remarkably good, if the reader likes to try it. There seemed to be no other travellers in the tavern ; and the host and hostess were delighted at the unexpected arrival of three well-looking cavaliers. They had hardly more time, however, than to stable their horses, and the host could not even finish the description he was giving to Master Bernard of the position and movements of the Royal Army and the troops of the Fronde, when a party of six was added to the number. They were all stout, gay-looking men, mounted on very tolerable horses, and well armed—too well armed, indeed, for any but troublous times and dangerous circumstances. The first who dismounted was a man not very tall, but powerful in frame, and with the eye of an



eagle. He sauntered up deliberately to the side of another personage much better dressed than himself, who seemed to be the leader of the party, and held his stirrup while he dismounted.

"See the horses fed, Gaillard," said the latter.

"I beg your lordship's pardon," said the man whom he called Gaillard, "but that is not my place, Monsieur Goulard. That belongs to the grooms. I'll dress your hair, or put on your shirt for you ; but I don't tend horses. I'll have nothing to do with any flesh but human flesh, though I am going to have an omelet to-night ; and that I'll cook with my own hands, for sure I am that the people of this place cannot cook one fit for the grinders of a gentleman's gentleman."

"Well, you are a saucy varlet," said the hostess, who had come out ; "I have cooked for better men than you, many a time, and they all say my omelets are the best in the world."

"I'll cook one against you this night," said the valet, snapping his fingers, "for a thousand—that is to say, for fifty sous."

"Oh, an omelet, an omelet, we will all partake of the omelets !" cried the other cavaliers ; "get ready, Gaillard."

"I'll bet upon Gaillard," cried one.

"I'll back the hostess," cried another.

"Ten crowns upon the hostess," said Monsieur Goulard.

“ I wonder where the devil he is going to get them ?” muttered Gaillard. “ Well, to the kitchen, to the kitchen ! Come, gentlemen, all, and witness this single combat and my triumph. I will even give Madame Marzot her husband, mine host, into the bargain to help her, and will beat her still by two turns and a half. Invite the strangers, I pray ; for this is going to be as glorious a day as that of Rocroi ;” and pulling off his pourpoint, he walked straight into the kitchen of the inn, calling aloud for frying-pans.

The rest followed ; Bernard Marsh with his usual grave demeanour, and the rest laughing and talking, and making bets upon the valet and the hostess.

Now the kitchen of a French country inn in those days was something peculiar. It was a large room, nearly thirty feet square, with a gigantic hearth and fireplace on one side, and a bench running round three sides of the chimneys, on which some ten or twelve persons could seat themselves without being roasted, although the *buche de Noel* itself—that is to say three-quarters of a beech tree—was burning on the hearth. On the other side of the room ran along a large table for the service of the guests ; and just opposite was a kitchen dresser of thick wood, clean and as white as snow ; having behind it a rack not unlike a manger furnished with rows of pots and pans, plates and dishes, sufficient, one would have thought, for the culinary

establishment of a prince. From the ceiling, which was low, depended a wooden instrument much in the form of a harrow, made of good stout bars crossing each other ; and through the interstices were seen a mighty store of various comestibles, hams, tongues, uncooked chickens, a dozen different sorts of boudins, besides long strings of onions, bunches of pot herbs, some hares, and an immensely large ancient goose, very fat but apparently very tough.

The guests scattered themselves about in different groups, talking to each other in low but apparently merry tones, while Maître Gaillard and the hostess bustled about seeking implements for the ensuing struggle. A couple of fat rosy maids came to the assistance of their mistress, and a large basket of beautiful and fresh-looking eggs was produced, Madame Marzot at first seeming all confidence and even indignation, at being defied on her own field of battle. But she was resolved evidently to have everything in order for the strife, and she was so long puffing up the fire, selecting the eggs, greasing the frying-pans, and chopping the fine herbs, that some of the party began to jeer her, declaring that she was shrinking from the combat.

In the meantime, a quiet and almost whispered conversation had commenced between Monsieur Goulard and our young friend Bernard Marsh, of which the rest of the party heard little, except the words, " I thought so, it was at Sedan "—" yes, just

before the exchange"—"of course you are upon honour"—"you cannot doubt it."

"Good Heaven," cried the hostess almost in a scream, "the man is going to put wine in the omelet!"

"Wine!" exclaimed Gaillard, putting down the bottle which he held in his hand, "I thought it was oil."

"And that is just as bad," cried Madame Marzot, "when you have good fresh butter there close at hand."

"I never fry my omelets except in oil," said Gaillard, in a magnificent tone.

"Fiddle!" cried the hostess; "there take the bowl and beat up the eggs, man. I declare I don't think you know anything about it. Why, you will poison the omelet with the fine herbs; you have put in, a peck at least. It will be as green as grass."

"You mistake," said Gaillard solemnly, "and herein you show your ignorance of the great art and mystery of cooking. I want to make an omelet sufficient for the whole company, and after the first agglomeration of the eggs, by means of the fork, there should be ten more put in much less percussed, in order to give solidity and succulence to the whole."

This was a complete poser for poor Madame Marzot, who had never heard such fine words in her

life before ; and she walked about muttering something in regard to sucking eggs, in order to make an omelet of them, adding from time to time in a low voice that she believed the man was mad.

At length, however, the great moment of trial arrived, the eggs were beaten up, poured into the frying-pans, and the two adversaries advanced towards the great wide fireplace, which was now blazing famously ; Gaillard at the right end, Madame Marzot on the left. The latter, with well-taught skill and dexterity, fried her omelet for a minute lightly, and retired a step or two to give it that firmer and more delicate toss which doubles the omelet much into the form of a cocked hat, and leaves it ready for the hungry guest.

All had gathered around the fireplace, and were watching the proceedings of Monsieur Gaillard with a funny and somewhat doubtful expression of countenance. It seemed to most of them that he was frying the omelet a great deal too much. It hissed and frizzled and sent up great clouds of ill-savoured smoke ; but at length he lifted the pan from the fire, and with an arm that would knock down an ox, tossed his conglomerate up into the air.

Oh, energy ill-applied ! Oh, strength misused !

The omelet rushed up to the ceiling, struck against it with a great squelch, and rebounded into the midst of the fire.

“Accursed be all these low ceilings!” exclaimed Maître Gaillard.

“The ceiling did not come to you, man,” said Madame Marzot.

But at that moment the kitchen door opened, and, followed by several others in military guise, there entered a tall, well-looking man, fully armed with sword and dagger, breastplate and back-piece.

Goulard and his companions drew back from the fire, Gaillard looked over his shoulder at the new comer, with one tremendous swing sent the frying-pan, grease and all, into the midst of the flame; and advancing towards the door, took the stranger in his arms, exclaiming:

“Ah, Monsieur de Marsin, welcome, welcome! All must be right now, as I see you here.”

“All is safe, your Royal Highness,” said De Marsin, kissing his hand; “I have three companies with me at the door, which will cut the way through for you if the devil himself and all his troops stood in the way; but I must say this is the maddest enterprise that ever your Highness undertook—to march a hundred and fifty leagues through an enemy’s country and across hostile armies, when Jules Mazarin would have given a million of crowns for your head.”

“I may get his cheaper before I have done,” answered Maître Gaillard, with a laugh, and then, turning to Bernard Marsh, he took him by the

hand, saying—"You must excuse me, Sir, for not noticing you before. I have had too many proofs of your discretion not to know that though you might recognize me, you would not either by word or sign betray me."

Bernard Marsh bowed low, saying, "The Prince de Condé, once seen, is never to be forgotten. Indeed, it was some business with your Highness which brought me hither; for, although you may think it strange, notwithstanding all the precautions you have taken, your departure from the South is already well known both to your friends and enemies in the North."

"All the more lucky that I escaped them both," replied Condé, "for friends would have been as inconvenient to me as enemies. But come with me to the camp: as soon as I have spoken a few words to Monsieur de Marsin, we will speak of your business there, and I may be able to give you some little entertainment—a ball or a *feu de joie*; or something of that kind."

Bernard Marsh bowed and drew back: but the Prince retired with Monsieur de Marsin into a little bedroom at the side of the kitchen, and remained there in earnest conversation for nearly half an hour. In the meantime the good hostess, all in a flutter at the idea of having tossed omelets with the greatest warrior of the age, was doing her best to prepare something for her princely guest;

but Condé's first words were when he returned, "To horse, gentlemen, to horse! If you need a hot supper you shall have it farther on."

The journey to the head-quarters of the Prince's army was speedily performed, he and De Marsin riding first, and the rest following; but Bernard Marsh found no opportunity of obtaining any private conversation with Condé either on the road, or for three days after their first halt. The moment they arrived at De Marsin's quarters, the Prince threw himself upon a bed, fully dressed, and in a few moments was sound asleep. The next morning, by break of day, the army of the Prince was on its way to Montargis. Then followed the brief siege of that town, where Condé in person, approaching the gates with a trumpeter by his side, summoned the garrison to surrender within an hour; and, with his watch in his hand, waited till the keys were delivered up. It is true that he promised to punish resistance by hanging every citizen at his own gate, and the citizens believed that he might very probably keep his word. Thus their hesitation was not very long. The citadel, which contained vast stores of arms and ammunition, was taken with the same facility, though Condé, in his bantering tone, was afterwards accustomed to call it "the miracle of Jericho." It is well known, indeed, that one of the towers of the castle fell while the trumpets



were blowing the summons, and the garrison was forced to surrender, though they had previously made every preparation for a vigorous defence.

Thus passed the time, however, during three or four days after the meeting of Bernard Marsh and the Prince, before any private interview could be obtained.





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MESSAGE.

**I**T was a very dark night ; the moon had set ; clouds covered the stars ; a deep forest, clothing some hilly ground to the west, shut out the last faint rays which still lingered in that quarter ; and a party of some ten or fifteen gentlemen, followed by a small body of troopers, might have found some difficulty in discovering their way, had not a man on a spirited little ass guided them with perfect certainty, not alone along the high road, but also upon the numerous by-paths which led to various valleys in the neighbourhood.

“ Mind ! the highest knoll, Jacques Bonhomme ! ” said the Prince de Condé, who was at the head of the party, addressing the man on the donkey ; “ I must see if it be possible—but we shall soon have light enough. So, my good friend,” he continued, turning to Bernard Marsh, who was riding near

his side, "you will not even don a cuirass, though I warn you we are going to have sharp work."

"Your Highness knows I must not engage in these hostilities," replied the young gentleman, "I come but to look on."

"What, just as an amateur?" said Condé, laughing. "Well, if you get shot, remember 'tis not my fault ; but it is my veritable belief that old Hocquincourt is asleep, or he must have found out some of our parties by this time. We will find means to make him. Spur on your *bourrique*, old man."

The guide did as he was commanded, and made the best of his way forward till he reached the top of a little monticule, which he declared to be the highest ground within ten miles of Bleneau.

There the whole party paused, and gazed over the scene around. A wide undulating plain stretched, from the belt of forest I have mentioned, for many miles towards the south and east ; and between the wood itself and the spot where Condé's party were congregated, extended some open fields over a gentle slope for the distance of about three miles. Some dark patches rising up here and there, with occasionally the faint outline of a church, indicated the position of various villages ; but the night continued very dark, and the only object which was at all distinctly seen

was a small river that ran glistening along in the plain below.

Condé sat perfectly still, with his eyes fixed upon the stream, for some five minutes, when a dark mass seemed to cross the river, obscuring its gleam at one particular spot for somewhat less than a quarter of an hour.

"Marsin is over," said the Prince at length ; "and now, gentlemen, I think we may begin the work. Fire a carbine, and blow a trumpet !"

The next moment, the discharge of a gun was heard, and then the shrill blast of a trumpet ; and in a few seconds a loud and confused noise of drums, cymbals, and trumpets was heard from a spot some three hundred yards distant. The same sounds were then taken up on the right, then on the left, in some eight or ten places, mingled with the roar of two or three pieces of artillery, together with the scattered firing of small arms, and a hideous hum of human voices. Then suddenly a bright blaze broke forth upon the left, showing a village all in flames, with the church tower plainly distinguishable in the midst. Another and another humlet was fired, and, in an amazingly short space of time, the whole plain was illuminated almost as brightly as if the sun shone upon it ; and confused masses of fugitives were seen rushing in terror and disarray from the various villages, where the royal army had been quartered, towards the head of a

causeway across some marshy land, while the small but compact bands of Condé's horsemen pursued the flying, and cut them down without mercy.

"Ah! Monsieur d'Hocquincourt," said Condé, with a laugh, as he gazed upon the fearful but brilliant scene; "by this time I think you have not a quarter left. This will teach you to keep your men closer together, I think. And now, gentlemen, that we can see our way, we had better have a little share in this affair ourselves. They seem to be making some resistance there at the *tête de chaussée*; let us ride down and take them in the flank. They will soon be dispersed, for I will swear they are well frightened."

Thus saying he put his horse into a quick trot, and, followed by the other gentlemen and his small body of troopers, rode down the hill towards a spot at the end of the causeway, where a desultory firing of musketry was going on, as if Marshal d'Hocquincourt was endeavouring to rally his dispersed army at that point. His men were soon scattered again by the fierce charge of the Prince de Condé; and the loss would have been much greater on the royalist side had not Turenne come up and repaired in some degree the indiscretion of Hocquincourt in spreading his quarters too far apart, by covering the retreat of the royal forces to Gien.

During the whole of these scenes, Bernard Marsh rode close to the Prince, unarmed even with defensive armour, such as the habits of those times required—foolish and ridiculous habits, which have not been wholly banished in our day, although every one knows that since the introduction of fire-arms, steel is no defence, and only an encumbrance. Still we say young Bernard Marsh went perfectly unarmed, for he had left his sword and even his pistols behind ; and he rode gayly and carelessly, too, avoiding no exposure, and talking as coolly to his great and daring companion as if he had been seated with him at the dinner-board.

Turenne, however, advanced, as I have shown, with a superior force, and planting his cannon so as to sweep the causeway, saved the remnant of the royal army. But Condé had already gained all that he wished or expected. All the advanced posts of the enemy had been taken, and the way to Paris was open. The science of war was very differently understood and practised in those days. A great defeat did not imply absolute destruction to one side or success to the other ; and though, God knows, the boldness of military genius was often enough displayed, the resources of military science were always ready to fall back upon.

Day was breaking brightly ; the trumpets were sounding the recall ; and the Prince, with Gourville, Bernard Marsh, and one or two others

took their way to Bleneau, the small town where Hocquincourt had slept the night before. It was a dull morning, with one of those misty drizzles in the air which are attributed especially to the dear old land of cakes, but which from time to time infest every country, from the north pole to nether Ind. But Bernard Marsh kept up easily with the Prince, though they rode fast, and found an opportunity of saying,—

“I am afraid your Highness has forgotten that I have a little business with you?”

“Ay, ay; but I have had my hands quite full, my good friend. What is it? Let me hear. I hope to Heaven it is not to ask me to pay an old debt; for I think, after this night’s work, that is the only thing I cannot do.”

“Certainly not that,” said Bernard; “for I am afraid that I have no claim upon your Highness, or doubtless you would find means to settle that matter also. But, yesterday morning, the Duc de L——, the Marquis de Breteuil, and Monsieur de Villeneuve, joined your camp at Montargis. These three gentlemen and a small party of their retainers, some days ago, carried off against her will a young lady, to whose father I am under obligations, and were riding away with her, when I stopped them. The Duke, as of your own blood, is, of course, too high for me to meddle with; and, besides,” he added, with a smile, “I do

not set myself up to be the champion of fair ladies, so that Monsieur de Breteuil also may pass unnoticed. But Monsieur de Villeneuve used some unpleasant language towards me on that occasion ; and I promised to give him a lesson, which I have now come here to administer. I did not choose to do so, however, without your Highness's permission."

"You will kill the poor devil," said Condé ; "and I shall lose a good soldier."

"No, I will not," replied Bernard Marsh ; "he is a good swordsman, I believe ; and I only want to instruct him a little in courtesy and politeness."

"A rough lesson, I am afraid, my good friend," replied Condé ; "but I cannot part with Villeneuve. He is one of my best followers. If I want a man to run his head against a post, I send for Villeneuve. If I want any one to be taken prisoner, and give the enemy any wrong information, I send for Villeneuve. Put him at the head as a cornet of horse, and he is sure to get into some scrape before the day is over, thinking all the time that he is one of the most strategic and skilful captains that ever lived. You must not deprive me of Villeneuve, my good friend."

"Only for a week or so, until he is better," replied Bernard Marsh.

"Till he is better ? No, no," said the Prince,



"let me try to settle the affair—an apology in writing to the young lady. That will do."

"Hardly satisfactory to me, but I submit to your Highness's pleasure," replied Bernard Marsh; "I doubt, however, that you will get Monsieur de Villeneuve to make the apology; and I only trust you will expedite the affair; for I hear that the plague has broken out behind us, and I am anxious to return."

"In order to catch it?" asked Condé, with a laugh.

"I was brought up in the midst of it," replied the young gentleman, "when the King was at Oxford, and we were in the field. I got quite accustomed to the ugly creature; and as it never did me any harm, I lost all fear of it. But I have to take care of some friends who do not know its ways so well as I do."

Thus they rode on, conversing on various subjects, till they reached Montargis, when the Prince de Condé told his young companion to wait for him at his quarters, and sent a servant to summon Monsieur de Villeneuve to his presence.

Some ten minutes after, the young gentleman who had been placed at Lucy's side when she was carried off from the *table de Pierre*, entered the Prince's room at the castle, with that sort of gay, reckless air which was very much affected by the young French nobility of that day.

"Be seated, Monsieur de Villeneuve," said the Prince, "I have a somewhat unpleasant message for you, from a young English gentleman."

"Ah!" exclaimed Villeneuve, in a supercilious tone, "I do not know any English, your Highness. I do not like the animal, and do not cultivate it."

"This young gentleman seems inclined to force you to know him," replied the Prince, gravely, "and the matter must be treated more seriously, Monsieur de Villeneuve."

"Assuredly, my lord," answered the other, with a sneering smile still upon his lip. "But what may this respectable gentleman's name be?"

Condé paused thoughtfully for a moment; and perhaps the reader may have remarked—as many of the officers and attendants had done—that, in conversation, the Prince never gave Bernard Marsh any name at all, but merely called him "my good friend," or "my good sir." At length he answered,—

"His name, sir, does not matter; and, to say the truth, I do not exactly know what he chooses to be called——"

"By my faith, your Highness, I think his name does matter," answered Villeneuve, boldly. "I do not know that I shall condescend to fight a man whose name I do not know—for that, I suppose, is the purport of this message."

Condé's face flushed, and he answered sharply,—

"Condescend! It is he who condescends. He is your superior, sir, in all things."

"He may not be my superior in the use of the sword," answered the young nobleman.

But Condé burst into a loud laugh.

"He is without exception the best swordsman in Europe," he said; "I have seen him disarm Martini, the famous Italian fencer, at the third pass."

Villeneuve was silent; but the Prince's countenance changed; his brow grew stern and dark, his lip compressed, and all traces of his contemptuous merriment died away.

"You have been bold, sir," he said, "to talk of condescending towards a gentleman from whom I give you a message. With him you shall deal as he thinks fit; but I now speak on my own part; you shall write a full and ample apology to the young lady whom you carried off in company with Monsieur de Breteuil, or——"

Villeneuve was a bold, and even rash man, and although he saw the unmistakable signs of haughty anger on the Prince's face, and knew what that anger implied in the case of Condé, he could not refrain from asking,—

"Or what? your Highness."

"Or you quit my camp instantly," said Condé, in a loud, stern voice; "and from that moment you are no longer my friend, but my enemy."

Villeneuve rose from his seat and stood before the Prince, evidently much agitated. He hesitated in silence for several moments, and then said, in a low and respectful tone,—

“I cannot quit your Highness! Had the consequence been anything but that, I would rather have cut off my hand than write what you require. As it is, I go to obey.”

“You do right, sir,” said Condé, whose anger was but little abated. “Mind that the apology be full and explicit.”

Villeneuve bowed, and withdrew. Condé sat and knocked one heavy boot against the other, apparently in not a very placable mood, for two or three minutes, and then saying, “It is time I should have some sleep,” called a valet from the ante-room, took off his cuirass, divested himself of his other arms, and threw himself down on the bed, which was then to be found in almost every chamber of a French house, giving orders that he should not be disturbed for two hours.

At the end of that time, he arose without being called—conversed for a few minutes with Gourville, and some other gentlemen who had been waiting for him, received a letter which he read and put into his pocket, and then sauntered quietly forth to the Barbican Tower of the old castle, which lay at some distance from his quarters. Without any announcement he walked in, but paused for a

minute or two on the stair, hearing a very beautiful voice singing.

"He is an extraordinary man," said Condé to himself ; and then finishing the ascent, he entered the chamber of Bernard Marsh, and put the letter he had received into his hands.

"That is full and sufficient," he said ; "now give me your word, my good friend, that you will cease your pursuit of the quarrel."

Bernard Marsh read the paper which the envelope contained, and then folded it up again, saying,—

"It makes no apology to me, your Highness, for the injurious words he used ; but my private satisfaction I, of course, submit to your pleasure. I shall leave the camp to-morrow morning early ; for if this gentleman and myself meet, we are not likely to part quite peacefully."

"Well, if you must go, do so," replied the Prince, in his usual bluff tone ; "but I do not see why all this business should not be composed between you and Monsieur de Villeneuve, or why you should not remain here and attach yourself to the party of the princes. This land is very nearly equally divided ; and *we* must be successful in the end ; for we are fighting for the inalienable rights of Frenchmen, against an Italian favourite supported by a foreign woman.

Bernard Marsh shook his head.

"Why not, why not ?" cried Condé, impetuously.

"Your King became of age in August last," answered Bernard Marsh; "high treason, your Highness, high treason!"

The Prince looked down somewhat gloomily, and then replied:

"There is something more, my good friend; we have known all about high treason a long time ago; but what makes you think we shall not be successful? You have something more in your mind?"

"Much," replied Bernard Marsh, "but I may speak too plainly, and your Highness is not accustomed to hearing plain truth quietly."

"Go on, go on," said Condé, nodding his head; "I will be as quiet as a dove, and only peck your hands a little if you hold my wings too tight."

"Well, then," answered the young man, "you have to recollect that, first, you have against you an Italian fox, with wit a great deal keener than the sword which hangs by your side; and next, you have against you a French wolf, with not less cunning, and more rancour."

"You mean Gondi," said Condé. But Bernard Marsh went on without directly replying.

"Then, again, if I may use what may seem an anomaly, you have a weak but powerful friend. Weak for all good purposes, powerful for all bad ones; clothed by his position with immense authority, incapable by character of using it in a straightforward direction—a prince whose friends

are not pioneers, but follow rather than go before him, blotting out the false steps he has taken, rather than opening paths to success, and bearing the axe on their necks, instead of in their hands."

"Gaston! Gaston!" said Condé, greatly moved; "the picture is too true—it cannot be mistaken!"

"Moreover, there is an enraged lady," continued Bernard, "who will not be easily appeased; but your own party is the worst defect of your Highness's position."

"What is the matter with our party?" cried Condé, starting up impatiently.

"That not one single member thereof has any principle of any kind," replied Bernard Marsh, very gravely.

"*Sacré bleu!* nor has any party in England!" cried Condé.

"Your Highness will pardon me," replied Bernard Marsh; "there is a great distinction. Wilfulness, vanity, and want of concert have ruined the majesty of England; but the royalist party has always had one bond of union—devoted loyalty. The rebels, or Parliamentarians, as they call them, were for some time much divided; but there is a bond of union which some of their leaders have not failed to discover and make serviceable—Fanaticism, my lord the Prince, and that is the most formidable agent that has ever moved men's passions in this world. Here I see

but one feeling which is likely to be permanent—reverence for the royal authority. But I must not suffer you to remain under the belief that it is your chances of success alone which move me. I have received kindness, hospitality, friendship from all parties in a foreign land ; and it would not become me, I think, to draw my sword against that crown which long protected me, though in these troublesome times its favour has been, perhaps necessarily, withdrawn ”

“ I am not drawing my sword against the crown,” cried the Prince, vehemently, “ but against an Italian knave,” and turning on his heel he left the room. Every step he took, however, he became more and more grave, and felt, perhaps, that there was much truth in the hard words he had heard.







## CHAPTER VII.

### THE DUEL.

**B**EFORE the sky was gray with dawn on the following morning, the horses of Bernard Marsh were saddled and at the door. The two servants who had accompanied him and were now prepared to depart with him, remarked nothing in his demeanour worth notice, and he whistled a few bars of an Italian air as he put his foot in the stirrup and swung himself into the saddle.

The streets of Montargis were empty of all persons but the little party itself, and one man on foot, who walked on before them, looking over his shoulder from time to time, as if somewhat suspicious of the three men who followed.

Bernard Marsh rode very slowly, patting his horse's neck and talking to him, and when one of the men reminded him that they had a long way to go, the young gentleman merely replied,—

“The more reason, then, to spare the horses at the beginning of the journey.”

The sun was just rising as they passed the gates ; but still the traveller on foot kept upon his way before them ; and they did not lose sight of him till they had ridden nearly a mile, when he seemed to turn into the wood, and disappeared. Just where he vanished appeared the entrance of a little footpath ; and at the corner a stone post, with half-effaced letters on two sides. After passing this stone some five or six yards, Bernard Marsh drew in his rein, and sprang to the ground.

“Here, Ralph, take my horse,” he said, in an ordinary tone, “and ride forward to the first cross. They tell me it is about a quarter of a mile farther on. I will rejoin you in a few minutes.”

The man took the bridle which his master held out to him, but both the servants looked at the young gentleman with some doubt ; and he had to repeat mildly, “Go on, my good fellows,” before they moved a step.

They did not venture to disobey, however ; and Bernard Marsh turned down the little path into the wood. It was very narrow, and the boughs of the old trees crossing overhead, rendered the gray of the unconfirmed day all the more sombre. Bernard walked slowly, with a grave air, carelessly knocking off the heads of some of the forest plants that bordered the path, till at the end of

perhaps a couple of a hundred yards, the trees fell more apart, and a little meadow, not much larger than a cottage garden, opened out before him. It was a dank and gloomy-looking place enough, edged on the side opposite to that on which Bernard entered by a small brook covered with water-cresses, and was itself clothed thickly with long, dewy grass. It did not seem a very cheerful resting-place; but there, at the opposite side, on the bank of the brook, sat the stranger who had gone on before the young traveller from Montargis.

"Good morning, Monsieur de Villeneuve," said Bernard Marsh; "we are both, I believe, a little before our time."

"Better before than behind time," answered Villeneuve in rather a rough tone: "it will soon be light enough. Where are your men? You agreed last night to come alone." As he spoke he eyed the seemingly slight form of Bernard Marsh from head to heel, gazing with a certain degree of contempt at his delicate hands, taper fingers, and small feet, and murmuring to himself something very like, "Fight with a girl!"

"I have come alone, Monsieur de Villeneuve," replied Bernard Marsh; "my men are a quarter of a mile forward on the road by this time; but you will perceive that as I have to go some forty or fifty miles in this very direction, after settling with you this morning, it was economy of time

and trouble to bring my servants part of the way with me—killing two birds with one stone, you see, Monsieur de Villeneuve."

The figure was not a very palatable one ; and Monsieur de Villeneuve exclaimed in an angry tone, "*Sacré matin !*"

He recovered himself in a moment, however, and said more placably, "There is light enough to see to measure our weapons, at all events ; and as you are in a hurry we had better do so. There is my sword, what is the length of yours ?"

"A little shorter, I believe," said Bernard Marsh, drawing the blade from the sheath ; "but it is all the same to me."

"By the Lord, you seem very confident, young man !" exclaimed Villeneuve, beginning to have some doubts as to the conclusion of the affair in which he had engaged.

But Bernard Marsh answered nothing, merely laying his blade along that of his antagonist, which was nearly two inches longer.

"This is hardly fair to you, sir," said Villeneuve, frankly.

"Oh, quite fair," replied Bernard Marsh, thrusting his sword back into the sheath, and seating himself near the spot where the other had been sitting. "Two inches make a good deal of difference in some things, but not much in a sword, if a man knows how to handle it. In five minutes we

shall have plenty of light, I think. But let me say a word or two to you first ;” and he pointed to a little molehill by his side, as if inviting the other to be seated.

Villeneuve sat down at once ; for there is a certain sort of air and manner which, as it were, gives command ; and Bernard Marsh possessed it entirely. “You will remember, Monsieur de Villeneuve,” he said, “that this affair is not of my seeking. When you addressed me last night in the streets of Montargis, I told you I had promised his Highness the Prince to be satisfied with the arrangement he made, and that I was satisfied. You required something more, and therefore I have met you here at your request. All I wish is to impress this fully upon your memory.”

“It is not forgotten,” answered Villeneuve, in a somewhat sneering tone ; “but you promised once to give me a lesson, and I cannot forego such an advantage ; for of course I consider it as such.”

“I think it may be so,” replied Bernard Marsh, quite quietly ; “and it may teach you two things : first, that it is not always safe to carry off a young lady against her will ; and secondly, that it is always dangerous to treat a stranger with contempt, because you think yourself a little the better man. The sun is getting up, sir, and I have a long ride before me.”

"God knows," said Villeneuve, "one of us, I take it, will not ride far to-day."

He spoke in a tone of much irritation; but Bernard Marsh merely replied, "We had better look over the ground, sir; it seems to me to be in a very bad and slippery condition." Thus saying he rose and walked forward, crossing the little meadow from north to east and east to west, looking down, as he did so, to see where soft places occurred in the spongy surface.

The sun by this time had completely risen above the horizon; but yet the light was somewhat faint upon the meadow; for the trees rose up tall on every side, shutting out completely the morning rays.

At length Bernard paused in the middle of the ground, threw off his hat and cloak, and drew his sword. "Now, Monsieur de Villeneuve," he said, "I am ready, whenever it may suit your pleasure," and at the same time he saluted him gracefully, according to the fashion of fencers in those times. Villeneuve followed his adversary's example, but with less grace, and, to tell the truth, with some misgivings.

"Stand on your guard, sir," he exclaimed, as he saw Bernard Marsh holding his sword somewhat negligently at the end of the salute; and he made a half pass at his breast, merely to awaken the young Englishman from his indifferent sort of

coolness. But his blade was instantly met by that of the young stranger, who, by the slightest possible turn of the hand, directed it past his shoulder. Scarcely feeling it necessary to change his attitude, Bernard Marsh stood solely on the defensive for some moments, parrying every quick and eager thrust of his opponent with as much ease as if he had been at play, till Villeneuve, quite out of breath, retreated two or three steps, still keeping a wary eye upon his antagonist.

"If you will excuse me, Monsieur de Villeneuve," said Bernard Marsh, "you will have to change that style of fencing. You round your wrist too much, and very often expose your shoulder."

"I don't think it," answered Villeneuve sharply, "touch it if you can;" and in the next instant his sword was again crossed with that of the young Englishman. One lounge, two lounges, then succeeded with great vehemence, and then Villeneuve retreated with the blood flowing down from the shoulder to the tips of his fingers.

"Take your time, Monsieur de Villeneuve," said Bernard Marsh; "I told you you exposed your shoulder."

"Nothing but a scratch," growled Villeneuve; "are you a fencing master?"

"In this instance I think I am," said Bernard Marsh. "You have had lesson one; if you want lesson two, I am quite at your disposal, after you

have taken a little repose. I stand here without moving, on my honour."

Perhaps this display of perfect calmness was more irritating to poor Villeneuve than an absolute insult ; but he had, indeed, so far received a lesson ; and, as he paused, gazing at his adversary, he determined to be more cautious in his next attack. Determinations are very fine things when we can execute them ; but at the outset Villeneuve forgot his so far as to cross swords with Bernard Marsh before he had fully recovered breath. The young Englishman, however, did not seize the advantage, but parried the lunges of his adversary with a calm smile, without ever returning them, till at length a better directed thrust brought Villeneuve's point within a few inches of his young antagonist's chest. It did not even graze him, or touch his doublet, but it showed Bernard Marsh that it was time to put an end to the combat. In the next pass, Villeneuve received another but deeper and sharper wound in the shoulder, and in the next his sword went flying in the air. Bernard Marsh quietly caught it by the hilt as it descended, and dropped the point of that, as well as of his own weapon.

"Monsieur de Villeneuve," he said, with his usual calm manner, "I have now kept my word with you, and I do not think, sir, that you can expect me to stay here any longer. In giving you back your sword, I know you are too much a gentleman



and man of honour to use it against myself, when I tell you that I have had enough of this affair."

"If you have had enough of it, I am sure I ought to have," said Villeneuve, in a better-tempered tone than he had hitherto used. I wish to heaven you would take my handkerchief out of my right-hand pocket, and help me to tie up my arm, for this blood is dabbling me all over."

"With all my heart," answered Bernard Marsh. "The bleeding will weaken you to, so I will do my best to stop it, though I am no good surgeon."

Thus saying, he took the wounded man's handkerchief from his pocket, and aided him, to the best of his ability, to stop the bleeding, which was considerable.

"You would have that pass over the arm, Monsieur de Villeneuve," he said; "I could not help it."

"It is all my own stupid fault, from begining to end," said Villeneuve: "well might the Prince tell me you are the best swordsman in Europe."

"No, no, not quite that," replied Bernard Marsh; "and you would be a good swordsman, too, if you would have a little more patience, and take some lessons from a good Italian master."

"Ah, patience, patience!" answered the other; "it is what I never had, sir, in my life, and your being so *sacré* cool, made me all the more impatient."

"I come of a cool people," answered Bernard Marsh, with a smile, "and have seen enough in my short life to cool the hottest drop of blood in my body."

"Well, well," said Villeneuve, "let us shake hands before we part, and be friends when we meet again. I had better get home and have this wound properly dressed, for it is getting very stiff."

"Can you get home alone?" asked Bernard Marsh; "I had better send one of my men to go with you."

"No, no," replied the other, "I shall do very well. I am not a woman or a baby to faint at the loss of a little blood. Just put the mantle over my shoulder, that I may not have the boys running after me, and you walk with me to the end of the lane."

The lane, as we have before shown, was not very long; and when they came out upon the high road, Bernard Marsh's two men were not in sight; but Monsieur de Villeneuve declared that he could get back into the town quite well, and parted with his late adversary as if he had been an old friend. It is wonderful how the *inevitable* changes our views and even our actions. We struggle and resist, and fight and scratch, so long as we imagine there is the slightest chance of success; but when we find that there is too strong a hand upon us, we console ourselves with the old aphorism, that "what can't be

cured must be endured," and, if we are not fools, endure it cheerfully.

Villeneuve's only thought, however, now was, how to get into the town and to his own room, without being seen ; and, as it was so early in the morning, he thought there was a good chance of his meeting no one but grooms and horse-boys. But he was destined to disappointment in this matter also. On the little esplanade before the Castle, which he was forced to pass, he found the Prince de Condé, the Duc de la Rochefoucault, Gourville, and several others. Sharp wits were soon upon him respecting his early walk and soiled cloak and hat ; but the Prince himself at length demanded,—

"Where have you been, Villeneuve, and what have you been doing?"

"Not very far, your Highness," answered Villeneuve ; "I have been taking a lesson in dancing, and it has been a pretty sharp one."

As he spoke, standing very near the Prince, he partly drew back his cloak, and showed him his wounded arm. Condé laughed aloud, at once divining what had occurred ; and Villeneuve gladly made his escape to his own apartments.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### A STORM.

**B**ERNARD MARSH walked on till he found his horse and servants waiting for him at the spot appointed ; and then mounting, he proceeded on his way, taking no notice of the adventure in which he had been engaged. The men, who had not been without their suspicions, soon satisfied themselves that their young master was not hurt, and that was enough for them. They were accustomed to curb their curiosity in regard to his affairs, and to obey without asking any questions.

The whole party rode on more quickly than it had done at an earlier hour ; but yet the horses were never put beyond a quiet trot ; and shortly after noon they came to a small inn where they waited for refreshments. The sky, which had been dull and misty in the morning, with that sort of equivocal haze which may either turn to heavy rain or give way to bright sunshine, had chosen the

latter alternative, and a cool, fresh wind had rolled up the vapours of the dawn into large, white clouds, which sailed slowly and gladly into space, looking like the genii thrones which we read of in Eastern tales. It was a beautiful day—in short, such as any man might enjoy who had not sorrow or sickness upon his shoulders ; but Bernard Marsh remarked that both in the host and hostess, though civil and attentive, there was an air of uneasiness and abstraction which is rarely seen in a French landlord. The good stout house girls bustled about as usual ; but there was something evidently upon mine host's mind ; and at length Bernard Marsh inquired frankly if he had met with any misfortune.

“Oh no, no, sir,” replied the man, with a shy look, “nothing more than ordinary. I had a cow die the other day.”

“Lord ! Mathew,” exclaimed the hostess, who was in ear-shot, “how can you talk so ? The truth is, sir, the plague is coming a great deal too near us. It is very bad in the next village out beyond there. You had better go through it quick when you leave us, for the air of the place is poisoned.”

“What is that large house or castle that I saw rising up in the distance ? ” asked Bernard, without seeming at all alarmed at the report of the pestilence. “Is the village you speak of at the foot of the hill ? ”

“Oh, bless you, no, sir,” answered the landlady, “that château is farther off than you think. The village of Montmarie, which I was talking of, is not ten miles off, and that château is nearly twenty. That is the fine old château of Mirepoix, sir ; built, they do say, in the time of King Henry II. It is a beautiful old place, made of stone, with all the lintels and posts of the doors carved into queer fancies, such as strings of fruits and flowers, and the like. I was born just under that castle. But I know one thing, if the plague comes any nearer, I shall go into Montargis, if I can get that man, my husband, to go. There is no use of keeping an inn where there is the plague.”

Bernard Marsh did not differ from her, but ate his dinner, paid his bill, and departed as soon as the horses had consumed their provender. A ride of about an hour and a half brought the whole party to the little village of Montmarie, where the signs of the pestilence became evident at their very first entrance ; houses shut up appeared ; sounds of wailing, and even shrieks were heard ; while here and there a man or woman might be seen rushing along with compressed lips and vacant eye, as if fleeing from some unseen terror. Yet the place was not without its merriment, for the sounds of a fiddle were heard ; and in the little Place before the pump, a whole group of young and old were dancing with frantic activity.

Bernard and his companions pushed their horses through the village as soon as possible, and were soon beyond its utmost limit ; but as they rode on, they remarked that the clouds were massing heavily over head, with every promise of a very heavy storm to conclude the day ; and the young gentleman continued the more rapid pace which he had now assumed, proposing to spend the night at Mirepoix, and hoping to reach that place before the rain came down. The storm began, however, when he was still three miles from Mirepoix, but not as he had anticipated. Broad flashes of sheet lightning spread over the scene, with occasionally a vivid line cleaving the sky, but not a drop of rain fell till he and his party had nearly reached the foot of the hill. Then large drops began to follow, making broad spots upon the dusty necks of the horses, while the heavy, black clouds before them, stretching down to the very horizon, promised a gush of water such as has seldom been seen since Noah completed the ark.

The road led apparently straight on, without turn or deviation on either side ; and there could be no doubt that they were on the right way ; but the only object that indicated a village was a solitary farmhouse, which was found closely shut up, and no entrance to be obtained at either door or window. Some four or five hundred yards farther was a *carrefour* where four roads divided, with

a finger-post, the indicatory arms of which had lately been repaired, so that it was easy to read on one of them the words, "To Montmarie four leagues, to Belaye eight leagues, to Mirepoix quarter of a league." There was no choice but Mirepoix. Montmarie was by no means a pleasant residence. Belaye was too far, considering the aspect of the sky and the drops already fallen; and Mirepoix, whatever accommodation it might afford, was too near to admit of hesitation. Bernard Marsh turned his horse upon that path at once, touched him gently with the heel and raised the bridle rein; and the good beast darted forward up the hill round which the road wound, as if he comprehended at once the necessity of speed, and divined his master's intentions. It was now nearly six o'clock, the sun and the horizon had met, and the clouds threw an unnatural darkness over the scene; but Bernard Marsh's eyes were good, and although he looked around on every side, he could perceive no cottage or farmhouse, or place of accommodation. The road wound straight up to a pair of fanciful old iron gates, flanked with pillars, covered over with beautiful arabesques, evidently sculptured in the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Beyond was a little open space, as if left for horses to turn; but beyond that again, there appeared not even a path. The walls and the grounds had a very ruinous aspect; and trees, which had once



been evidently well kept and trimmed into formal shapes, were now ragged and straggling, while under the old walls which flanked the enclosure many a stone had fallen, and many a wild shrub sent forth its branches, marking the eternal triumph of nature over art.

Bernard Marsh paused before the old gates, and looked up towards a house which, higher still upon the hill, loomed up in the semi-darkness in the immense proportion of one of the buildings of a former day.

"We must ride up at all events," he said. "There is a light in one of the windows, and they will never refuse one shelter on such a night as this. I had heard the place was quite deserted ; but there must be somebody here. Open the gate if you can, Ralph ; the rain will soon come down very heavily, and having but one doublet, God wot, I would feign keep it as dry as possible."

The man rode forward and obeyed ; the gate was opened without difficulty ; and the whole party rode in, and up towards the house, certain of finding some sort of shelter for themselves and their horses in one of the manifold porticoes or colonnades, which they could see from the spot where they were. There was assuredly a light in one of the windows, and as they rode on another appeared in a different part of the building.

"We shall find some one, at all events," said

Bernard Marsh, "some farmer probably put in to help the place to go to decay, to use these beautiful arabesques to build a new chimney, or carry away sculptured mullions and crockets for barn supports and grinding stones."

About three hundred yards more brought them up to the esplanade or terrace, with its vases and statues ; and Bernard Marsh pushing on, sprang to the ground, cast his rein on his horse's neck, and advanced to the great door, which was still in a very good state of preservation, with the large notched ring and iron rasper still hanging by their original chains. He did not trouble them, however, but knocked hard with the hilt of his sword, when immediately a voice from within exclaimed, "Come in."

Bernard Marsh entered, and found a large and magnificent room but feebly lighted by a couple of wax candles stuck in one of the fixed candelabras at the side of the mantelpiece ; but that which surprised him the most, was to see before him, leaning on a marble table in the centre of the hall, no other than Sir Edward Langdale himself.

The knight's face lighted up when he saw his young guest ; and he advanced and shook hands with him warmly.

"Ah, Master Bernard, Master Bernard," he said, "I fear you have been playing me a trick. Where have you been this last week?"

"I have been to Montargis, sir," replied Bernard Marsh. "I had the good fortune to be present as a spectator at the combat at Bleneau, and saw all Marshal d'Hocquincourt's quarters carried one after another by Prince de Condé in the most masterly manner.

"And is that all?" asked Sir Edward.

"Not altogether, sir," replied Bernard Marsh; "I have a letter to deliver to you. It is addressed to Mademoiselle de Langdale; but it had better be given to her by her father."

As he spoke he drew forth the letter of apology written by Monsieur de Villeneuve, and handed it to Sir Edward, who read it twice over, and then put it into his pocket, saying,—

"I will deliver it; but I am sorry, Bernard, you took this affair upon yourself. It would better have become me."

"Your pardon, sir," replied Bernard Marsh, "I had little to do with the affair: his Highness, the Prince de Condé, handed me the letter."

"Now, in honesty and truth, Bernard Marsh," said Sir Edward, "did you or did you not peril your life to obtain this apology?"

"No, sir, I did not," replied Bernard Marsh; "I told the fact to the Prince de Condé, and he insisted upon the letter being written; but——" he paused and hesitated, and his cheek turned somewhat red; but then he added frankly, "I must not deceive

you, Sir Edward, Monsieur de Villeneuve and myself had a little affair to settle together on account of some words he addressed to me. I promised to give him a lesson, which I have given him since that apology was written, and entirely independent of it."

"Have you killed him?" asked Sir Edward, in a very grave tone.

"Oh, no," replied Bernard Marsh, "I would not have killed him for the world. He seems to me a very good sort of a young man, though impetuous. I would have let him off with one wound if he would have been content; but he would have a second. Neither was more than a scratch, however; and he will be quite well in a few days. Probably I might not have hurt him at all, if I had not been anxious to get back to Belaye, and I had no time to throw away upon long fencing matches."

"Doubtless you are surprised to find me here," said Sir Edward; "who directed you?"

"I had not the slightest idea you were here until I opened that door," replied Bernard Marsh; "I came here with two men who accompanied me (and who are now, I fear, getting very wet without), solely to take shelter from this storm. Hark how it is pouring! Can they put up the horses anywhere, Sir Edward?"

"Assuredly," replied the knight, "there are good stables at the back of the house, though somewhat

dilapidated. Stay, I will come with you and give them directions."

The men soon received orders to go round to the large *écuries*, which were usually attached to every gentleman's house in France at that time, and then to seek out the kitchen, dry themselves, and obtain some refreshment.

"They will find plenty of hay in the stables," said Sir Edward; "as to oats, I am afraid there are none; for we had no time to bring them with us, and as I have not been here half an hour, we have not been able to get them from the farm."

"Then you came here in haste, Sir Edward," said Bernard, as they re-entered the hall.

Sir Edward shook his head very gravely.

"We came here in great haste, indeed," he said, in a sad tone. "The fact is, Bernard, the plague has made its appearance at Belayc, and it is a lucky thing that you stopped your course here. Two of our servants died this morning. They had been ill for some days, and the stupid old doctor would not own the truth till the men were dead. I had never seen the ugly monster before, and could not judge of the symptoms."

"I have seen it many a time," replied Bernard Marsh, "and have nursed more than one man through it. I suppose, then, you have brought over Lady Langdale and your family?"

"They are all upstairs," replied Sir Edward,

"seeking somewhere to pass the night ; for the house is, as you may see by this hall, well nigh if not altogether unfurnished, but the little we have was brought over with us on pack-horses. The fact is, this estate I hold in right with my wife. Belaye was left us by a dear friend, now dead. To keep up this château is too much for our means, as it had been for those of my predecessor ; he let it go greatly to decay before his death. During Lucette's minority it suffered still more. Since then I have proposed often to have it repaired, but the troubles of these sad times, and the necessity of contributing everything I could possibly spare to the support of the King's cause, have prevented me from fulfilling my intentions."

He paused and fell into thought. A look of deep gloom came over his countenance. That look was explained a moment after.

"Good God ! Bernard," he said, "I trust none of the children can have caught this dreadful disease."

"I trust not, Sir Edward," replied Bernard Marsh, "but I have been told it more frequently attacks grown people, and those of the most robust constitutions. They are all well at present, are they not ?"

"Quite well, quite well," replied Sir Edward, "but hush ! here comes Lady Langdale."

The next moment Lucette entered the room with that calm and cheerful air which she had never

lost amidst all the vicissitudes which had attended her early life. Her surprise at seeing Bernard Marsh was very great ; but she was glad to see him, for he had won greatly her regard during the last month, and she thought that his society would be a comfort and support to her husband, whom she had never seen give way to apprehension before. Lucy and the three boys were speedily added to the party ; and all the little arrangements they had made for rendering themselves comfortable during the night were told in gay and jesting tones. Lady Langdale, it is true, puzzled herself a little as to where they could put Master Bernard ; but when he discovered what the difficulty was, he laughed, pointing to the floor, and saying,—

“On that floor, dear lady. I have lain as hard many a night.”

“No, no,” said one of the boys, who was clinging to Bernard, “let him have my bed. I can sleep in a chair.”

All the young people were evidently delighted to have him back among them ; and Lucy, with her dark eyes full of light, and a slight blush flushing on her cheek, thanked him more fully than she had previously done for delivering her from the people who had carried her away.

“You will have to thank him still further, Lucy,” said her father, “for he has somehow contrived to

extract this written apology from the Marquis de Villeneuve ; ” and he handed her the paper. Lucy read it ; and, while her mother took it from her hand to do the same, and the boys crowded around to see, the poor girl, with a pale cheek, and a somewhat hesitating manner, looked anxiously at the young gentleman, saying, “ I hope, Master Bernard, it was not by—any—violence you forced him to write that ? ”

“ Oh, dear, no,” replied Bernard ; “ I merely mentioned the facts to the Prince de Condé, and he insisted upon the apology being made. Villeneuve is an officer of his, and was obliged to comply.”

“ I am very happy,” replied Lucy, “ but I would not for the world have you risk anything for me. It is sad enough that men must peril their lives so often for their King and country, without having to do so for every little quarrel.”

Sir Edward Langdale smiled and looked meaningly at Bernard Marsh, saying,—

“ I am afraid, Lucy, you would not do for a soldier’s wife.”

“ Oh, yes, she would, Edward,” said Lady Langdale ; “ where honour or necessity called for it, Lucy would not attempt to keep any one she loved from obeying the summons. She is your own daughter, Edward, and can be as firm as you are when need requires it.”



The mother's confidence in her child's character had soon to be sadly verified. That evening passed calmly, perhaps even cheerfully. The next day rose bright and smiling, and the whole family, if they could not forget the proximity of the plague, thought less of it than they had done the day before. Various arrangements were made with the neighbouring farmers to render their new residence comfortable for the time, and occupation for a while at least diverted thought. That day passed also in tranquillity ; but the next was to show a different scene.





## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PLAGUE.

**I**T is wonderful what skill, activity and taste will do to produce comfort out of discomfort, neatness out of disorder. By the day after Bernard Marsh's arrival at Mirepoix, the greatest change had taken place in the old château and Bernard himself had become, no one knew how, the heart and soul of all the arrangements. He was full of cheerful life and spirit, setting this thing and that thing and the other thing in order ; now arranging some scattered furniture in the saloon ; now, with Sir Edward's permission, taking care that ample provision was made for the horses, now insuring that full preparation had been effected for feeding the family, without sending to any great distance to obtain supplies. He was a different creature altogether from the young man who, two months before, had appeared at Belaye, and, without knowing why, the demeanour of the whole

family was changed towards him. The word "Master" was dropped altogether; and even Lucy herself, though she was a little timid at first, called him nothing but Bernard. One of the boys was always with him to assist in his arrangements; and, indeed, it was evident to Sir Edward Langdale that his young guest was striving to give employment both of mind and body to the family, in order to withdraw their thoughts from the terrible scourge which surrounded them.

The third morning rose at length, and the whole party assembled cheerfully to breakfast. Danger and care seemed forgotten, and only one incident checked the early part of the morning. A courier left at the door, without coming in, a packet which he said he had brought over from Belaye, not having found the Chevalier Langdale there. It was found to contain the whole amount which had been taken from the party at the *table de Picrrc*, and also Sir Edward's diamond ring.

Of course it was not without satisfaction that he recovered it, but Sir Edward had remarked the eyes of Bernard Marsh fixed two or three times, with a fixed, anxious sort of look, upon the face of his second boy. He gazed at the boy himself—but he could discover nothing, except, perhaps, that he was a little paler than usual. He was as gay, or perhaps gayer, than common with him, and joined in the sports of his brothers with all alacrity.

Towards noon, however, he came in complaining of headache ; and the moment the eyes of Bernard Marsh fell upon him, his countenance became very grave. There were two bluish spots upon the boy's face ; one upon the forehead, and one under the right eye, and Bernard knew the miserable sign too well. He lost not his presence of mind a moment, however.

"Sir Edward," he said, starting up with a gay look, "there's only one cure for a boy's headache ; bed, Sir Knight, bed. My room is the nearest ; and I took care yesterday the bed should be comfortable, so Master Richard shall have that for the time ;" and catching the boy up in his arms, he carried him away at once.

Sir Edward Langdale followed ; but he dared not question his young companion, merely aiding to undress his son and put him to bed. Bernard Marsh was all cheerfulness, as long as he was in that room ; but the moment he had quitted it with his host, he said, gravely,—

"I think, Sir Edward, it would be better for you to send to Paris for a physician. I would go for one myself ; but circumstances prevent me from entering Paris."

"Has the boy got the plague, Bernard?" said Sir Edward, grasping him tight by the arm ; "you have seen it—has he got the plague?"

"I fear he has," answered Bernard Marsh ; "he

has two spots on his face, which I never saw but in that disease."

"I saw them, I saw them !" replied Sir Edward ;  
"my poor boy !"

"Though it is certainly a very terrible and often fatal illness," said Bernard Marsh, in a very gentle tone, "yet many recover from it ; and I have remarked that careful nursing and unremitting attention do more to bring about a happy issue than any medicines which I have ever seen given. I will undertake to be poor Richard's nurse ; and we will hope for the best."

Sir Edward wrung his hand hard.

"Thou art, indeed, a noble friend !" he said,  
"but I will share the task with you, Bernard."

"At all events," replied the young gentleman,  
"Lady Langdale and the rest of the family had better go, or keep themselves entirely in the other wing of the house."

"She will not do it," said Sir Edward : "this must be told, of course ; for I have no idea of concealment in families ; and Lucette will never leave her plague-stricken boy."

Bernard looked down, but only murmured in reply,—

"She is right ;" but he then added, suddenly, "at all events, Sir Edward, you had better send to Paris for a physician, and if you can get a bottle of the plague-water of Madame Lavange, which I have

heard is a powerful preventive, we may stop this from spreading further."

"I will go myself," replied Sir Edward, "and bring some one with me before to-morrow morning. It is but seventeen leagues, and can be done easily. But let us go in and tell this sad news."

At none of the events just detailed had Lucette or Lucy been present; but while the eldest and the third boy were hanging round their father in the hall, and inquiring eagerly what was the matter with Richard, Lady Langdale and her daughter came down from above, and the sad truth was told. A few tears naturally gushed from Lucette's eyes; and she said, "God help us!" Then turning to her husband, she asked,—

"Where can we send Lucy, and the other boys?" adding, "Lucy, my dear child, you must go directly."

"Mother, you always taught me that I was to do my duty," replied Lucy, firmly; "my duty is with Richard; and I will not leave him."

"But there are plenty here to give every attendance, my child," said Sir Edward. "Our young friend here, who has seen the disease, nobly offers to take a part of our cares; and though I must ride to Paris to bring a physician, I will be back ere morning and relieve his watch."

"Father, I must have my share," said Lucy; "you must not deprive me of that privilege. If

my brother were to die, and I had not tended him, I should never have any peace."

"Let it be so, then, my husband," said Lucette. "We will none of us shrink from our duty. Let us take it in turns to attend upon the sick, and trust to that merciful God in whose hand is life and death."

In about half an hour, Sir Edward rode away with a heavy heart for Paris; and the day at the château of Mirepoix passed sadly over. Lady Langdale could hardly be persuaded to leave her boy's room even for a little rest. Bernard Marsh never quitted him, and when Lucette was persuaded to retire for a short time, and suffer Lucy to take her place, Bernard was still watching by his side. The poor boy was now very ill, burning with fever and talking incoherently from time to time. More of those terrible blue spots had appeared on various parts of his person, and no longer any doubt remained that he suffered from plague in one of its severest forms. But Lucy lost not her firmness or composure for a moment. She glided calmly and quietly about the room, smoothing the sick pillow, seeking for a little vinegar to mingle with the water, gently opening or closing the windows, as the caprices of the poor boy required; and when he dozed away into a restless slumber, she sat silently watching with Bernard Marsh, fearing to awaken the sufferer even by a

whisper. When the slumber became more profound, almost approaching stupor, she conversed in low tones with the companion of her watch, seeming to derive much comfort and consolation from the words he spoke. His knowledge of the disease, his calm firmness under its actual presence, the hopeful tone in which he spoke, all seemed to reassure her ; and that night's vigil was not without salutary effects on Lucy's mind.

"I wish you would go to bed, Bernard," she said ; "you have been here all day. I can tend him quite well now. See how he sleeps ; and my mother will be back in a few minutes, I am sure."

"I am not in the least tired," replied Bernard Marsh. "If you knew how often I have kept watch for whole nights together, you would understand that this does not fatigue me. I wish, however, that you would sit on this side of the bed, where the wind would blow over you to him."

Lucy smiled and changed her seat.

"It little matters," she said. "We are in the chamber of death ; I feel it. The will of God will decide the rest. Do people ever recover from this pestilence, Bernard ?"

"Oh, yes," replied Bernard Marsh ; "some years ago, when I was a mere boy, and with the King's army at Oxford, one of my brothers, since dead, was seized with this pestilence at Barnet.



I went to him directly, and never left him. He recovered ; and I have known many others. Indeed, two out of three get well."

"Did ever you see any one so ill as he is restored to health?" asked Lucy. "How terrible he looks! One would hardly know him—in twelve short hours!"

"I have seen people much worse than he is quite well within the year," replied Bernard ; and then, fearing he was raising hope almost too high, he added, "I do not much like this heavy sleep. I have known people wake from it much worse."

Lucy rose and bent her head over her brother, watching his face as he lay breathing heavily before her. As she did so, her beautiful black hair fell over her shoulders, and her form seemed to assume additional lightness and grace, while her rich, warm complexion contrasted strangely with the bluish tinge upon the cheek of the suffering boy. To the eyes of Bernard Marsh she looked like an angel bending over the dying to meet the departing spirit at the portals of death.

Before it was fully day, Sir Edward Langdale arrived from Paris, accompanied by a physician, a young man of talent, who was the only person whom even money would bribe to go into the infected district. He was a grave and an eager man ; and if he had not much experience, he had much energy. As soon as he saw the little boy,

his face fell ; but he relaxed no effort, and by all the means that were known in those days, he endeavoured both to save the sufferer, and to prevent the infection from spreading through the house. Free air was admitted everywhere, fumigations of many kinds were used, the plague-waters of Madame Lavange were administered largely.

Vain, vain, all vain ! the destroying angel had gone forth, and was not to be satisfied without its appointed number. Several of the servants fled ; several remained ; some caught the disease with more or less severity. But let us not pause on the terrible history. At the end of the month, health had returned to the château at Mirepoix ; but sadness and gloom were upon it. Lady Langdale had had the malady badly, but had recovered ; her eldest son was also convalescent. Lucy had had it very lightly ; her sweet calmness seemed to have disarmed the enemy ; three of the servants had died ; Sir Edward and Bernard Marsh had escaped entirely ; but there were two boys less in the house : and the father and mother, the brother and sister mourned for those who were taken away from the face of the earth at the moment when earth is brightest, and hope is leading on life most gaily.





## CHAPTER X.

### THE BUDDING OF LOVE.



MONTH again passed ; the air became cool, nay, even frosty in the nights and mornings ; the pestilence passed away, and the whole neighbouring country was declared free of disease. The family of Sir Edward Langdale returned from Mirepoix to Belaye, but the change which had come upon their household since they had left their favourite residence was as great as that which came over the temperature, and somewhat similiar in character. Every one of them felt that the world was colder, that there was some sunshine gone ; and when moments of thought intruded, and they remembered the loving eyes and happy looks which they could see no more, it was as if a frost—an eager and a biting frost—fell upon their hearts, and rendered the very brightness of safety chilling. But there were other changes that had taken place in that family,

of as much importance to our history. The feelings of Bernard Marsh and Lucy Langdale towards each other were very much altered. They could never look upon each other with the same eyes again, after their vigils by the dying boys, and a long course of mutual sympathy and reliance. All the family indeed regarded Bernard Marsh in a different light from that in which they had viewed him before. His noble self-devotion, his fortitude, his untiring activity and skill, his almost womanly kindness to the sick and dying children, had made them all feel as if he were a son or a brother.

But the change was greater than this in Lucy. It had been gradual, and to herself almost imperceptible ; but yet from time to time she would be startled at her own sensations, she would think it almost wrong to look upon him as a being of a superior kind, to let him occupy so much—nay, can we not say, the whole of her thoughts ; and once or twice, too, such reflections would bring a little coldness upon her manner—perhaps it would be better to call it timidity. But it seldom lasted for an hour ; and his presence would soon make her as gentle and familiar again. She might say “ Master Bernard ” once or twice ; but it was speedily “ Bernard ” once more ; and if the truth must be told, notwithstanding this little hesitancy, when Bernard Marsh, as was now much his custom,

rode out with her brother in the park, taught him the use and management of the sword on horse-back, showed him how to parry the push of a pike, or to strike even a minute object without exposing his own person, Lucy would creep to a window whence she could see them, and return more thoughtful than when she went.

It would be unfair to expose poor Lucy's feelings thus without saying something of those of Bernard Marsh. Now there are a thousand different ways of falling in love in this world ; and I have descanted upon this subject enough in other works to render it unnecessary to dwell upon it here. But I only wish to point out that Bernard Marsh was not one of those people who tumble in love at every step, whose heart is a mere barrel of gunpowder, ready to explode at the first touch of the match. He had in life had other matters to attend to, and he had somehow cultivated the notion, that it was better for him, placed as he was, to avoid all sensations, all affections even, which could withdraw his mind from the great object of his life. He knew what an absorbing thing is love, and he had resolved never to trust himself within its influence. But could he pass through such scenes as he had passed through with Lucy Langdale, could he see that beautiful form and lovely face bending without a thought for herself over her plague-stricken brethren, could

he trace in every word, in every thought that heavenly mingling of tenderness and firmness, and keep his resolution? It was all in vain : day by day, and hour by hour, he felt admiration changing into tenderness, and tenderness spreading forth into love.

We must not say that he gave way without a struggle, that he did not give up many an hour to thought, that he did not consider his position in every point of view, and ask himself how he should act. But struggle, and thought, and consideration were of no avail. It appeared with him, as it happens with most men, that these resources came too late. Bernard Marsh was in love before he knew it.

In regard to how he should act, the question was easily decided. He resolved to let things take their course, to withhold nothing from Sir Edward Langdale, whenever a fit opportunity of explanation should occur, to act towards Lucy as he had previously acted, without thought or restraint, but to bind her by no ties till he had obtained her father's full consent ; and Bernard thought he could obtain it. At the same time he did not deceive himself so far as to imagine that he would abstain from seeking her love. Strange to say, with a blindness common to unpresumptuous men, he did not at all comprehend that Lucy loved him already.

There was one way of ingratiating himself with Sir Edward Langdale which Bernard took unconsciously. Both Lucy and her brother, though they had felt the pestilence but in a light form, had been greatly weakened by it, and were still languid and feeble when they returned to Belaye ; and a few words dropped by Sir Edward showed his young friend the anxiety he felt for his boy's future health. From that moment, Bernard Marsh applied himself by robust, but temperate exercise, to strengthen the young lad's constitution. He led him to all manly sports, was himself his companion and instructor, little thinking that while engaged with friendly zeal in this task he was winning the admiration of the father, and fostering the love of the daughter by the skill and grace which he himself displayed.

As far as his efforts with young Henry Langdale were concerned, the course he took was perfectly successful. Every day the lad gained greater strength. His cheek recovered the hue of health ; his chest expanded, his arms became robust, and sleep returned to his pillow at night. But Lucy still continued feeble. She became weary before the day was done ; and the rose which was once so bright in her cheek seemed faded away for ever, though the eyes were still as bright as stars, and the lips kept their carnation.

It was one evening not very long after their

return that the whole family, as was now their custom, had assembled together in the great saloon, and Lucy seemed more than usually fatigued. Her mother urged her to go to bed; but she replied, with a smile,—

“I will go in a few minutes; but I have taken a strange fancy, dear mother, that if I could hear Bernard sing I should rest better.”

There were two who started at her words; one was Sir Edward Langdale, who looked up suddenly from the book he was reading with an air of surprise. The other was Bernard Marsh, who instantly rose and went to the neighbouring chamber for a lute that was there. He returned in a moment, and sitting quietly down, first put the instrument in tune, and then throwing his hands over the strings, produced a strain of exquisite and solemn music unequalled by anything that his auditors had ever heard before.

“This should be played on the organ,” said Bernard Marsh, “and sung by four voices.”

He felt that it was a moment when music might be a medicine, and his subject and his melody were well chosen.

Turn not away the head,  
As if no joy were left,  
As if e'en faith were dead,  
And life of hope bereft.



Bend not thine eyes to earth,  
As if repose were there,  
As if no smiles were worth  
The calm of mute despair.

One lapse of sunny day  
Pictures man's life below,  
Soft in the morning ray,  
Fierce in the mid-day glow.

Weeping perchance, at eve,  
Through hopeful gleams of light,  
Unwilling earth to leave ;  
Setting at length in night.

Yet in the darkest hour,  
When not a star is seen,  
Faith has her grandest power  
E'en in that sombre scene.

Man knows another day  
Once more shall greet his eyes,  
And all that's past away,  
In greater beauty rise.

All listened, all felt the application of the words, but Lucy felt most strongly, bending forward as if to catch every tone, till at length her head rested on her hands, and then, when she covered her eyes, the bright tear-drops were seen forcing their way between her fingers and coursing down her cheeks.

When he had done she started up, saying,

"Thank you, thank you, Bernard, this will do me much good. I have wanted tears for the last month ;" and she hurriedly left the room. Her mother and brother followed her, and Bernard remained alone with Sir Edward Langdale. Both

were silent for some minutes, the one letting the lute rest upon his knee while his eyes were bent down upon the strings in deep thought, the other gazing at him with a grave and inquiring look.

Suddenly Bernard raised his eyes, saying,—

“Sir Edward Langdale, it is time that we should have some explanation.”

“I think so, Bernard,” said the knight; “what I have seen this evening has taken me by surprise.”

“Painful surprise, no doubt,” said Bernard Marsh; “but perhaps some part of that pain may be dissipated. I never thought to love any one. I gave up my whole youth to one great cause, and I had thought that no one—no passion, no affection, could ever alienate one thought from that cause. But I love your daughter, Sir Edward, with feelings that have grown upon me imperceptibly, but none the less powerfully——”

“Have you spoken to Lucy on this subject?” interrupted Sir Edward, gravely.

“Not one word,” answered Bernard. “I would not have done so for a diadem: first, because I had not spoken to you; and secondly, because I have not at this time the means of maintaining her in that rank to which she and I are born.”

He laid a strong emphasis on the word “I,” and Sir Edward replied, after a moment’s thought,—

“The loss of my property of Buckley, confis-

cated to the use of the Parliament, has very much diminished my income ; but still, Bernard, I am not an avaricious man. At a future period Lucy will have competence, for the estate of Mirepoix is, to use the English phrase, 'settled upon my wife's eldest daughter.' My son takes this property, as well as some others ; but Mirepoix is a fine estate."

"Now I understand," said Bernard Marsh, abstractedly.

"What do you mean ?" asked Sir Edward.

"Merely that I understand why Madame de Chevreuse should wish to obtain possession of your daughter. Doubtless she had promised her hand either to Monsieur de Breteuil or to Monsieur de Villeneuve."

"Perhaps so," said Sir Edward ; "but to the point : I cannot suffer Lucy to engage her hand or her affections to a man of whom I know little or nothing, however much I esteem what I have seen of him."

"Ah ! Sir Edward Langdale. I fear you have somewhat changed your views since your own youth !"

Bernard Marsh took a pen from the inkstand on the table, and wrote four words upon a scrap of paper, then quietly handed it across to Sir Edward Langdale, who started up the instant he had read it, and grasped him by the hand, exclaiming,—

"My noble lord, how glad I am to see you!"

But Bernard put his fingers on his lips, saying,—

"Hush! my dear sir, that name must never be mentioned while I am here in France. It is only on the condition that I remain perfectly incognito that I have permission to remain at all. The moment I am generally known, I must remove to Breda and join the Prince, which, for many reasons, I do not wish to do at present."

"But I fear you cannot long remain concealed," said Sir Edward Langdale. "You spoke of having seen the Prince de Condé, and when you returned you had two men with you who disappeared the same night."

"His Highness has kept and will keep my secret carefully," said Bernard Marsh; "and as for the two men, they are old and faithful friends, on whom I can rely. But now let me return to the point. Do you object, Sir Edward, to my seeking your daughter's affection? for if you do, I must quit this dwelling before daylight to-morrow."

"Can you ask the question seriously?" said Sir Edward Langdale. "The noblest of the noble, the bravest of the brave, could never ask the hand of Edward Langdale's daughter in vain."

"But remember," said Bernard Marsh, "that he is also the poorest of the poor."

"That matters not," replied the other. "None can say in this strange age what a few days or a

few months may bring forth ; but, happen what will, we have enough, and you shall share with the rest. I have long seen and known that you were not what you appeared ; but I took you for another person. You are so young for all you have undergone. My lord duke, your brother, whom I know well, must be much older."

"Many years," said Bernard Marsh ; "I am the youngest of the family ; but my brother led me into battle at fifteen, and fraternal love, as well as loyalty, has since commanded my whole thoughts."

"Now God forbid," said Sir Edward, "that love for a child of mine should withdraw those thoughts from the holy cause you have so well sustained, as long as there is one hope left ; but I have learned by some experience that the bright paintings of the old romancers are not altogether fanciful, and that high and noble love is inseparably connected with high and noble actions—nay, is a source from which they well up as bright waters from a fountain. But let us speak no more of this to-night. Lucy is still very young, and we shall still have time and to spare."





## CHAPTER XI.

### LOVE IN FRUITION.

**T**HERE is such a thing as "delicious silence," although the old gentleman who first put those two words in such near relationship was, I believe, well laughed at, in his day and generation, by the daws and other small birds who live by pecking the fruits of literature. Yes, I have known and felt it when I have escaped from buzzing crowds and rushing carriages, from all the commingled sounds of joy and sorrow, folly, remorse, anguish, selfishness, despair, merriment, and madness, which roar in a great city, to the calm, quiet woods or solitary glens of my native land. I have felt it still more profoundly, when in the ancient forests of the new world; the charms of strong contrast are not added, indeed, to heighten the impression of the stillness, but that stillness is so profound that silence is not only delicious but sublime.

But there is another sort of silence, too, which is delicious—a moral, mystical silence—a silence of the heart—when eager feeling and turbulent emotion are stilled as if by the voice of a divinity above the waves, repressing the vexed waters of passion by the command, “Peace! be still!”

Heaven knows, that in the bosoms of Bernard Marsh and Lucy Langdale there were feelings, if not turbulent, at least strong and struggling, during the few weeks following the conversation detailed in the last chapter. No word of love was spoken, no feeling of the heart found voice.

At first the restraint was painful, even to both. The young cavalier, less self-confident in the hall than in the field, would fain have had some assurance of Lucy’s regard before those words were spoken which never could be recalled, and the reply to which would leave his fate, he thought, one of happiness or misery for ever. The first strong affections of his heart were given; but there was a joy even in their muttered indulgence which he feared to lose by one rash word, and he went on letting the flowers of the heart expand from day to day, like buds in the unconformed sunshine of the spring.

On her part, the feelings of Lucy Langdale were far more strange and difficult of utterance. He knew, he could not be ignorant of what was going on in his own breast; but she dared not scan her

own sensations or his. A new world was opening to her—the world of the heart ; and it was full of wonders. She might often ask herself what his changed manner meant ; she might enquire almost with fear why his society had become so dear to her ; she might feel terrified at the strong inclination which led her to seek it, and might wonder that her parents so readily yielded to every plan which brought her and Bernard Marsh together.

And yet no word was spoken ; but gradually the newness and the strangeness passed away, and feelings of trust and confidence grew up. There is an interpreter more eloquent than words, a voice more clear, more convincing, than ever issued forth from human lips, a writing of the soul upon the tablet of the face, which cannot long be misunderstood.

True, like words inscribed in that sympathetic ink of which we read, it can only be deciphered by those who have the secret ; but love soon gives the key, and all is clear. Yet, when at last the mystic scroll was read, and Lucy and Bernard felt that between themselves at least there wanted no seal upon the contract, no spoken word to tell them that each loved the other, for a time there was silence still ; but it was because such “silence is delicious.” It is the bloom upon the mature fruit, the light shining through the ripe grape. Woe be to him who presses it too roughly !



I am fond of such themes, though they are of things passed away from me—perhaps the more so because they have passed. Who can look upon a child peacefully sleeping, and not think with refreshment of heart, “How sweet!” Who can behold two hearts full of innocent love, without saying, “Oh, could I love so again!” But I must not dwell upon these things too long. Let us go on.

I have said that Lucy had been educated in great seclusion, and knew little of the conventional restraints of those days—restraints not quite banished even yet from society in England or France, where at that time a young woman’s life vacillated between gay license and hard restriction ; but she did not know enough to make her marvel at the perfect liberty allowed her by both father and mother in the company of Bernard Marsh. The morning ride on horseback with him and her brother, in the fresh and bracing month of January, was not only allowed, but encouraged ; and the reason assigned was the re-establishment of her health, to which, in Henry’s case, the same exercise had contributed so much. But this was not all ; many a pleasant opportunity for private communication was given, for which no such reasons could be named. True, there was always some motive to be found. Her voice, though sweet and rich, wanted cultivation, and who could give it such

finish as Master Bernard? If the wind were too high, or the turf too slippery for exercise on horse-back, the long, straight walks of the park, the alleys of hornbeam and yoke-elm, afforded long and pleasant promenades; but still it was thought better that she should have some more robust companion than the ordinary soubrette; and Bernard Marsh was the invariable guide of her morning walk. Liberty grows into habit; and as Lucy's health and strength returned, leave and license were no longer sought, but taken as a matter of course; and, while the season advanced towards the brighter days of spring, when no excuse existed for this exclusive companionship, it followed easily, merely by habit.

Thus, early one morning in the month of February—that month when a solitary wild flower will be seen beneath the brushwood, and rabbits run frequently across the open walks, and the thrush sits upon the bare tree-tops, and sings a welcome to the approaching summer, Lucy and Bernard strolled out before breakfast, and, as the day was warm as spring, sat down for a few moments beneath a tall oak.

“I will sing you a song, Lucy,” he said, “an old song of my own land, and try if I can outvoice yon bird above our heads. I can tell my tale of happiness, mayhap, as well as he,” and resting one hand in hers, upon her knee, he sang.

## SONG.

" My Love is like the red, red rose  
That's newly blown in June ;  
Oh, my Love is like the melody  
That's sweetly played in tune.  
So fair, so fair, are thou, my Love,  
So deep in love am I,  
That I will love thee best, most best,  
Till all the seas run dry.

" Thine eyes are like the stars above,  
Thy breath is like the breeze,  
That wafts the odour of the flowers  
Beneath the summer trees.  
So sweet, so sweet, art thou, my Love,  
So deep in love am I,  
That I will love thee best, most best,  
Till all the seas run dry.

" Thy heart is like the gentle dove,  
Thy soul an angel's, given  
To guide my spirit up with thine  
Unto thy native Heaven ;  
So bright, so bright, art thou, my Love,  
So deep in love am I,  
That I will love thee best, most best,  
Till all the seas run dry."

The air is attributed by some to David Rizzio ; the first stanza is very ancient ; the last two were more modern. But it was not the music, though it is exquisite, nor the words, though they probably said all Bernard Marsh could intend to say, which gave force to the song. It was the look and the manner which put the stamp of the heart upon the poetry, and, as so often happens, brought the latent

truth forth from its nest of flowers. The name of love was then first mentioned between them. Then, for the first time, that musical—that magic word sounded on Lucy's ear. Then, for the first time, the enigma which is written in dark characters on every woman's heart was solved for her, and Lucy felt fully she was beloved, and that she loved in return.

When in the tales of fairy land the talisman is first touched by the hand destined to possess it, the shrine trembles, the guardian spirits grow faint before the will of Fate, and the temple is shaken to its foundation. Was it not so with poor Lucy Langdale when first the great mystery of her feelings and his was unveiled to her? Ah, yes! Her limbs quivered like a leaf in the light wind of spring, her cheek turned pale, her heart beat as if it would have burst; and she would have fallen forward on the ground, but that there were arms open to catch her.

“Mine, Lucy, mine!” murmured Bernard Marsh, as he pressed her to his heart. “Mine, with your father and your mother's full consent. Oh, say that you are mine!”

For a moment she was silent, and some tears crushed themselves amongst her jetty eyelashes and glittered like diamond sparks upon the lids; but the clasp of her hand upon his grew somewhat firmer, and at last she looked up for an instant;

and the one word "Bernard!" told all that could be told.

It was a moment of exquisite happiness to both ; but it was but a moment. There was a rustle among the trees on the other side of a little brook which ran gurgling through the fallen leaves at the foot of the knoll where they had been sitting ; and a man dressed in the gay costume of the court jumped across, exclaiming,—

"Very pretty, indeed! This will be news for Sir Edward Langdale."

It was a moment when the temper of an angel might have given way ; the cheek of Bernard Marsh grew fiery red.

"Begone, Monsieur de Breteuil," he exclaimed, "or I will chastise you as I have already chastised one of your companions!"

They were the last words Lucy heard ; a blow was struck, swords were drawn ; and after two passes the weapon of the Marquis de Breteuil was flying among the tree-tops.

What was it put a fiercer and more angry spirit into the heart of Bernard Marsh than had ever before tenanted his bosom ? Probably it was that there was a new passion there—a passion that intensifies all others. However that may be, the first impulse was to draw back his sword in order to pass it through the body of his adversary ; but a better feeling triumphed.

"Get you gone!" he said, "get you gone, for fear I treat you like a dog. I would not forget that I am a gentleman, whatever you may be."

Breteuil sprang to regain his sword, and though he was somewhat cowed, yet Heaven knows what the end might have been, had not Sir Edward Langdale and two or three servants—some his own men, and some strangers in riding gear—come up at the moment.

"What is this?" exclaimed the knight, "my lord!—Bernard! see to your young lady, Pierrot."

"I have been foolish enough to be angry, Sir Edward," said Bernard Marsh; "this person, Marquis of Breteuil, thought fit to intrude in a rude manner upon my conversation with Lucy; and I had well nigh given him a more severe lesson than I gave one of his loose companions a month or two since. But I am calm now."

"Then put up, put up!" said Sir Edward, "attend to Lucy. She has fainted. Monsieur de Breteuil, you have brought me miserable news in the letter of which you were the bearer. I descended as soon as I had read it, to offer you the hospitality of my house, though it must be a house of mourning; but you have brought also strife and dissension into my family, and I can now only wish you a safe journey back to Paris. I cannot entertain a man who draws his sword in the presence of a lady. How fares it, Lucy? She

is better—her colour comes back. 'Tis all over, my girl ; Bernard, aid her back to the house."

"He struck me first, Sir Edward," said Breteuil ; "I draw not my sword before women ; but I bide no buffet from any man, be it given where it may."

"This noble gentleman would strike no man, sir," replied the knight, "but upon just cause."

"This noble gentleman !" repeated Breteuil, with a sneer. "Well, perhaps I may meet this illustrious obscure again."

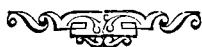
"Perhaps so," said Bernard Marsh, who still held his weapon unsheathed in his hand.

"Bernard !" said Sir Edward, in a melancholy tone ; "they have murdered your King. Is this a day and hour to think of personal quarrels ?"

Bernard Marsh pressed the hilt of his sword to his breast, and then thrust the blade back into the sheath, exclaiming,—

"Now God forbid that this should ever be drawn again but to avenge him !"

Sir Edward Langdale waved Monsieur de Breteuil back with his hand, and then aiding Bernard Marsh to raise Lucy from the ground, joined in supporting her back towards the house.





## CHAPTER XII.

### A PARTY OF CAVALIERS.

**T**IME had passed ; month after month had gone by ; Lucy Langdale was in her nineteenth year, and still she was Lucy Langdale. But the months, the days, the hours had been filled with events which belong to the broad field of history, but which had twice snatched from the hand of Bernard Marsh the cup of happiness when it was at his very lips. Need we pause in our tale to relate those events to any one who has studied that agitated period which intervened between the death of Charles the First and the summer of 1651 ? or need we dwell on the part taken therein by Edward Langdale and Bernard Marsh ? Let us pass over that interval and all that it contained ; the voyage to Scotland, the insults poured upon the young King by his fanatical and pedantic subjects at the north, his separation from his tried and trusty cavaliers, and his spirited march into England in hopes of that energetic support he was



not destined to find. Suffice it that Bernard Marsh and Sir Edward Langdale were amongst those driven from the young King's side in Scotland, but never abandoned his cause, and that they were also among those who, retiring to England, endeavoured to raise a force to support their monarch, while he hurried forward from Carlisle towards Worcester.

It was a stormy night in the end of August, and over the wide moor the wind blew in fierce gusts, dashing the large drops of rain against the little lozenges of glass in the casements of a small inn on the confines of Worcestershire. There was no thunder, though the air was intolerably warm, and loaded, it would seem, with electricity; but yet a voice could hardly have been heard in the house, unless raised to a very high pitch, so great was the noise made by the falling torrent and by the wind, now hissing among the whortle bushes and long reeds, now howling like an overburdened spirit among the tall, thin fir trees which dotted the heath. No voice, however, was heard within those walls, and the only tenants of the large room which served the purpose of kitchen and dining-hall, were an old man sitting at a table, with the long, gray locks falling over the thin hands by which his head was supported, and his good dame, but a few years younger, though apparently somewhat more stout and hearty.

For her part, notwithstanding the heat of the atmosphere, she sat upon a settle by the fireside, and every now and then put on a stick or two of wood beneath a large caldron which simmered from a hook. Neither moved from their places, and for more than an hour neither spoke; but at length the old man said with a sigh,—

“He won’t come to-night, Maud. The weather is too coarse. Hark ye now, what a song the wind is singing; and the rain would break the casement in, were’t not for the big apple tree.”

“He’ll come, old Gaffer—he’ll come,” answered the woman, in a cross tone. “I don’t know my boy, if he don’t come. You are always croaning over the weather, and think as much of a drop of water as an overslaugh. Who’d ever think you’d been a soldier?”

“Well, well, dame,” replied the old man, “it’s all that soldiering that stiffens one’s joints. Many a worse night than this I’ve lain out, with no better blanket than the moor, and no warmer coverlid than the gray sky; but now it tells, good dame—now it tells.”

“And, if you did so, why shouldn’t your son?” said the old woman; “he’s as hearty a man as ever you were, I wot. But come or not, there shall be hot broth ready for him and his folks, old man, if I sit here till cock-crow.”

Both relapsed into silence again; for thirty years’

experience had made the old soldier somewhat cautious of bringing his wife's tongue upon his head; and near half an hour passed without another word.

At length, however, he started up from a sort of semi-doze, exclaiming,—

“Hark! I hear horses' feet splashing along the moor.”

“Pooh!” cried she, unwilling to deceive herself, but still listening eagerly, “’tis but a plump of rain. You are always thinking you hear—yes it is—it is horses' feet? Get down the ladle, Gaffer, and the big platters, and set the seats. I knew he would come. It is young Johnny, for sure—open the door a bit to show the light.”

The old man seemed active enough now, though he did make a terrible grimace as he twisted his rheumatic hip in starting up; but he opened the house-door in a moment, and stood looking out, undaunted, in the heavy rain; while his wife screamed for Betsy and Tom, and poured a flood of unsavoury epithets on the heads of the sleep-ridden servants.

The sound of horses' feet was heard plainly enough now, coming quickly across the heath, and there seemed to be many of them, for the beat of the hoofs was frequent and irregular. Before the horse-boy and the “slut,” as the old lady called her, could get down beyond the kitchen-door, there was

a cry of "Halt!" without, and the drawing of bridle-reins, and prancing, with a shrill neigh, as if one of the beasts at least recognized a place of shelter and rejoiced. But the old man suddenly came back into the kitchen, and partly turning his head, without shutting the door, put his finger on his lips as a sign to his wife, saying in a low voice,—

"Strangers—troopers!"

The next moment he was all landlord-like civility, and as a small party of weather-beaten men walked carelessly in, it was,—

"Give you good-night, sirs; give you good-night. Terrible weather for August. Well, I wot how the seasons have changed since I was young; but all things have changed for that matter. See to the horses, Tom; put settles, Betsy; a good, large stable here, gentlemen! How many horses may there be? Plenty of oats and hay, and that of the best."

During this address he had been running his eye over the strangers, and his face grew brighter as he saw the slouched hats and drooping feathers, the laced cloaks and velvet doublets of his guests.

Those were dangerous times, and even the poor man was forced to conceal the feelings of his heart; for where tyranny takes the name of liberty opinions become crimes, and might makes right. The host was cautious then; and before he uttered a word that could commit him, left the stranger.

to gain some better indication of their party than mere smart clothes and love-locks could afford. Indeed at first he doubted whether he had not made a mistake ; for one of his guests, in plainer apparel than the rest, took him by the ear, saying,—

“ Verily, friend, thy praises of thine oats smack of malignancy and godless self-seeking. Thou wouldst palm thy musty provender upon us ; and though the beasts do want the creature comforts as well as we, wouldst engage us with strong waters while they are fed on trash.”

But a roar of laughter, which followed this sally, set the good man’s heart at ease, and he was hurrying to bring forth the stone jug of strong Geneva, to which few cavaliers objected, when a tall young man, who had been standing at the door with one still younger, talking to the people without, gave his last orders, and turned into the inn. All made way for him as he advanced towards the table, and fixing his keen bright eye upon the landlord, he said,—

“ I fear, mine host, we have come upon you somewhat unexpectedly. Have you anything for these gentlemen to eat ? The horses must be well fed, too : and though the men can sleep in the stable—for it seems a large one—they must also have some food. We have ridden twenty miles without bit or sup.”

“ Oh, we can provide, we can provide, noble sir,”

said the host ; "there is plenty of bacon, and as good a cold salt round as ever was cut, and——"

His voice trembled as he spoke ; his hesitation became greater and greater ; and, at last dropped upon his knees before the young stranger, caught his hand and kissed it, exclaiming,—

"It is, I am sure it is! my noble Lord the Earl of Dartmoor! who saved my poor old life at long Marston Moor, and shot Colonel Langly of the Ironsides (who had me down), and then carried me out on your own horse. You were but a boy, then ; but I know you, I know you! How can I ever forget you?"

"I remember something of it," replied the other ; "you were one of those, if I am right, who made your way with Prince Rupert to Chester. We had to use our spurs, my friend ; but I trust a better time is coming now. Is there any news afloat in this part of the world? Speak freely. We are all friends here."

"Let us eat freely and drink freely first, my lord," said one of the guests ; "for, by my fay, we have been long without. The old codger can tell his tale while we are employing our grinders."

"Well, well," said the young nobleman, who well knew the humour of his followers, "so let it be. Methinks we shall have time without interruption, in this solitary place ; but remember all,

that though we shall have space enough to eat and drink, and obtain most needful news, we have no time for laziness. It is now nine o'clock, and every one who would follow me must be in the saddle by three. Sit ye down, gentlemen, and get what you can. I have lived long enough in these strifes to know that, if we eat not when we may, we may chance to have two days fasting. Eat and warm yourselves, I say. Master Henry and I must go for a moment to see that the horses are well cared for. If the men be not, by my troth, they are likely ones to help themselves."

Thus saying, he went out to the large stable, where he found the horses in course of being fed, and several of the men engaged in the laudable occupation of plucking cocks and hens, of whose presence they had speedily disencumbered the chicken-house. Some words of warning, and a stern rebuke to a man whom he found drinking privately behind the stable-door, were all that the young gentleman spoke in the stable; but when he stood in the little garden, with the still younger man who had accompanied him, he turned to him gravely, saying, "These are sad scenes for you, Henry. It were well, dear youth, could they be avoided; but you yourself have found that exercise, though rough and wearisome, strengthens the limbs and confirms the constitution, and thus, with a noble mind, experience of even the ruder and

baser things of the world serves but to call forth and invigorate the high and pure feelings of the heart. We must bear with these men, not alone for the rich devoted spirit of loyalty which elevates them, but for a thousand qualities which they hide under this loose exterior. Not one of those fellows who will sit drinking and jesting there all night, would not peril life and all that it is worth to-morrow, to do that which they believe to be a good action."

"I believe it truly, Bernard," replied the lad. "Have not you mingled for years with such men? But still, after the quiet life I have so long led, it somewhat shocks one to see such recklessness."

"Well, then, take some supper, and go to bed and repose," replied the Earl; "it is well not to become too familiar with what is bad in our common nature. To-morrow, or at furthest the day after, we shall rejoin your noble father; and then must speedily come an event that will set at rest fear and hope for ever. The King has a fine army; but yet the traitors have a better; and the country rises not as I could have wished. We must do our best, and God defend the right! But one word more, Harry. If I fall, as may be, for one cannot escape these occasions always, comfort poor Lucy, and say that for her sake I did not expose myself rashly."

"I will go with you, Bernard, wherever you go,"



answered Henry Langdale, pressing his hand, "but we shall soon join my father, I trust. He cannot be far off."

"God knows," said Bernard Marsh, whom we must now know by another name, and recognize as that famous Lord Dartmoor whose exploits, even as a mere lad, had raised him to the height of renown, and even eclipsed those of his noble brother the Duke of ———, to whom even the stern regicides conceded the terrible privilege of laying his royal master in his bloody bier—"God knows! I have not heard of the King for many days, and only guess he must be tending towards Worcester. The last news of your father was from Lancashire, and his letters were full of hope and spirit; but I say God knows, and he only. We are scattered like a flock of doves at the first shot of the fowler, some here, some there, with little unity of action, small means of information, and hostile forces gathering round us in every quarter. In the meantime, the last accounts I had from France, and yours too, if I mistake not, were anything but consoling—your dear and excellent mother almost driven from her own house by the factions of the land; all that we trusted to others, whom we esteemed our friends, neglected, as is always the case with the affairs of the absent; her estates and those of her husband threatened with confiscation on the most idle pretences, and danger of

Lucy herself falling into the hands of the worst enemies of your house. No, no : you must live, Harry, especially if death is to be my lot. You have much to do, my duties to perform, and happier days to see ; for this cannot last always. Even nations recover sooner or later from the fits of delirium which sometimes seize them ! ”

He spoke slowly and in a desponding tone ; and then turned to the little inn. During the absence of the two young men, the guests they had left had done justice to the good cheer of the host, and had evidently made intimate acquaintance with the stone jug of strong waters, of whose possession he had boasted.

The host himself seemed somewhat fidgety and uneasy, and the good dame had stoutly resisted all attempts upon the large iron pot which she kept boiling over the fire. “ That was broth for her son,” she said, and added in a low tone, “ it was not fit for gentles such as them ; ” but when any one came too near, she showed a hotter spirit, and, well accustomed to deal with the rough soldiery, whether cavalier or roundhead, kept them at bay, now with the large two pronged meat-fork, now with the great skimming-ladle, some scalding drops falling from which on the knee of a too persistent intruder into the mysteries of the caldron, strongly enforced her arguments.

However, when the Earl re-entered, one-half the

party were singing, pouring forth generally cavalier songs neither very remarkable for decency nor melody, while others, in a somewhat maudlin state, intoned psalm tunes, which they had probably learned during some period of enforced and hypocritical submission to the dominant party. "Hey for Cavaliers!" was being shouted by at least half a dozen voices; and although the appearance of one whom they all revered, notwithstanding his youth, produced some change in their demeanour, yet it was evident that they intended to "make a night of it after their wet ride," to use their own expression.

"Ay, here comes one who can really sing us a song," cried one of the most vociferous shouters. "My Lord, I heard you sing once as I never heard any one else. Do give us a stave now, for the honour of King Charles."

"On one condition, gentlemen," said the Earl, "and that is that after I have done, we all lie down to rest. Remember that at this very moment we are surrounded by dangers, and that the King's crown may depend upon strong arms and clear heads to-morrow, or the next day. Foul fall the man who would peril his sovereign's throne for a late carouse or a cup of strong drink! If you are all agreed, I will sing, although to say sooth, I am much in need of some repose myself."

"Agreed, agreed!" cried several voices, while one

added, "Empty the jug, Colonel Johns ; singing never spoiled good liquor ;" and taking a seat amongst them, Lord Dartmoor sang,—

They've laid it low, that kingly head,  
With mockery and insult slain.  
For us he fought, for us he bled,  
For us he ventured all, in vain.  
But loyal hearts are not yet dead,  
And the King shall have his own again.

Ho, for a brighter field ! What ho !  
Another Charles has risen again.  
Wipe out the days of pain and woe !  
And strike for royalty amain !  
One glorious hour, one conquering blow---  
And the King shall have his own again.

Perchance before to-morrow's sun  
Shall set beneath the western main,  
The traitors' hour-glass shall have run,  
And justice come in victory's train.  
Forward, strong hearts ! the day is won ;  
And the King shall have his own again.

But let us win, or let us lose,  
What heart to yield, shall not disdain,  
Till God, in His good time, shall choose  
To free our country from its chain ;  
And far and wide shall spread the news,  
The King has got his own again.





## CHAPTER XIII.

### SHOOTING A SPY.

“**N**OW, gentlemen, your promise!” said Bernard Marsh, as soon as his song was concluded, “let us to bed and prepare for to-morrow ; for we have work before us, depend upon it.”

“Take some supper and some strong waters, my Lord,” replied one of the cavaliers: “you have neither eaten nor drunk all day, though you have worked like a horse.”

“A crust of bread and a cup of cold water,” answered Lord Dartmoor, well knowing how much more efficacious example is than precept in this follow-my-leader world. “When the battle is won, I will do you all justice, in as brimming a glass as ever was filled ; but foul fall me if I drink anything but water till ‘the King has got his own again!’ To bed, gentlemen! to bed ; and wake with strong arms, clear heads, and stout hearts.”

There was some wrangling and confusion ere the guests dispersed. Some wanted the best chambers, some were content with the worst, so that their leader was well accommodated : others were very well contented to stay where they were and take their rest on settles, or even on the floor, rather than exercise powers of locomotion which had been somewhat embarrassed by the contents of the stone jug. The landlord insisted, with a pertinacity not to be expected from his feeble nature, on reserving the best room upstairs for guests whom he averred would arrive during the night, and his good dame had the key. Thus the door could not be opened without violence ; and the most resolute of his customers were at length content to put up with what accommodation they could find, rather than waste their time in breaking through oak planks.

At length silence was restored ; and though there was snoring from above, and sounds of deep sleep from those little beds, let into the wall, and much in the form of knife trays, still to be found in many of the ancient cottages of England, none seemed waking but the Earl of Dartmoor, and the old landlord and his wife.

Young Henry Langdale had retired some time before, and the good dame sat gazing upon the pot, which seemed her chief object of interest in life, while her husband placed himself behind the young

cavalier, who continued in meditative mood at the table, and from time to time cast a somewhat anxious and inquiring look at the Earl, as if he wondered why he did not go to bed with the rest.

At length Bernard Marsh turned suddenly towards him, saying, almost sternly,—

“Come hither, Master Grey! What meant that sound of horses’ feet just now? Who are the guests you expect to-night?”

“I expect my son, sir,” answered the old man in a somewhat hesitating tone: “he has gone across the moor.”

“And come back again, and brought more than one horse with him,” replied the young nobleman: “there were six horses at least passed that window. I saved your life, old man. Do you mean to betray me?”

“Now, God forbid!” said the landlord, warmly. “I believe it was my son; but you see, my lord, I just whispered a word to Tom, the ostler, to warn him that there were troopers in the house; and to lead him round to the shed behind, away from the stable; he has got women with him—ladies of good estate; and God knows what may happen in these rough times.”

The young Earl raised his head high, with an air almost haughty, saying,—

“Think you, Master Grey, that I have not power over these men, to bid the best of them back if he

transgresses the rule of proper discipline? By my faith, if so, I have laboured through life in vain. Go out and tell these guests to come in. They are safe, were they Cromwell's daughters; yet stay," he added, as the old man turned to depart. "They have men with them of course—how many?"

"I know not, my lord," answered the old man; "Tom has not come back."

"I heard no horses' feet go hence," said the young Earl, thoughtfully; "but woe to you, if any one has gone to warn the roundheads of our lodging here. Go and send one of the men to me. Let the rest stay where they are, till I have time to inquire into the matter."

The distance from the inn to the shed seemed to be far; for the old man was long in returning; but when he came back he was accompanied by a stout-looking peasant of some thirty years of age, light of limb, but strong and muscular. His face was one of those frank and honest visages, so often seen amongst the English peasantry; for though the dark gray eye and broad forehead showed a world of intellect, there was nothing small or mean in the expression of the whole, and he raised his look full upon Lord Dartmoor's countenance, as he entered, as if his heart were quite at ease, notwithstanding the drenched and drizzled state of his apparel.



"What is your name?" said the young nobleman at once; "methinks I have seen you before."

"Likely," replied the other; "my name is John Grey, or young John, this old merchant's son."

"Merchant!" said Lord Dartmoor, in some surprise.

"Ay," answered the other; "when he was young he dealt in hard blows. Since then he has dealt in smooth words; now he deals in strong waters."

"Well," answered the Earl, "we have no time now for riddles, my good friend. How many have you in your party?"

"Eight, sir," replied the peasant. "Three women, myself, and four men—two to them and two to me."

"Is that the same number you set out with?" inquired Lord Dartmoor; but the man answered frankly, and with a laugh,—

"No—they are more by one. He joined us on the way. But if you want to know, sir, whether any one has left us on the way, I say no. Odds life, our horses would hardly carry us any farther on such a night as this. Now I pray you, sir—my lord, father calls you—let us come in to the fire and get something warm; for there are two beautiful ladies with us, out of whose cheeks all this rain would have washed the red, were it not of Heaven's own painting. They are not fit for such rough nights, nor the chamber-maid either; for she

is a dainty little bit of goods as ever I saw, though she be a French girl and speaks small English."

"And what are their names?" asked the Earl, his curiosity a good deal awakened.

"Faith, I can hardly tell you that," said the man. "One is a Countess, that I know; and the other is her daughter—not easy to tell which is the youngest or prettiest; but the young one seems to know some of your people; for as we passed the back of the house there was a person singing in here, 'the King shall have his own again,' and the lady said she knew the voice, and would fain have come in at once; but mamma was more cautious, and did not choose to trust to a mere sound."

"She was wise," said Bernard Marsh; "the young lady must have been mistaken. But, pray, let them come in. They shall be safe, and well entreated, be they who they may, French or English, roundheads or cavaliers."

"Lord, sir," exclaimed the old woman from the fireside, "they are the wife and daughter of as fine a gentleman as ever you saw, though he was sadly down-hearted when last he was here. They had just taken his blessed Majesty to Hampton Court at this time, and the gentleman was three months hiding in our little place before he could get across the water. So he recollected us always, and just sent to Johnnie a week ago——"

"Hush, hush! mother," said the young man,

"his honour says they may come in ; and I will go bring them. I'll trust to his word ; and they sadly want both food and rest. They can tell him what they think fit, when they see him themselves. Every man's business, nowadays, is to hold his tongue, when he has not got the thumb-screws on him, and sometimes then too."

Thus saying, he left the room ; but the old lady, with a propensity to gossip which has sometimes been observed in ancient dames, came close up to the young lord's side, and poured some information into his ear, which seemed to have what novelists call, a thrilling influence upon him.

But ere she had half done, he started away from her, saying,—

"I will go and see ; he would never think of bringing them by the stables. There are but two sentries out, and doubtless they are fast asleep, for they were all tired to death. But we must have no accidents ;" and opening the door, he was issuing forth, when he was evidently encountered by the coming party ; and a sweet voice was heard to exclaim, "Bernard, Bernard ! I was sure of it. I could not mistake that voice."

"Who goes there ?" cried another tongue at a little distance.

"A friend," answered the voice of Bernard Marsh.

"Speak ! give the countersign," was the reply ;

but ere any one could answer, a small spot of red light appeared through the darkness, and the Earl, who well knew what it meant, had only time to throw himself between Lucy and the sentinel, when a pistol, which had hung fire for a moment or two, in consequence of the dampness of the night, was discharged, and the ball passed through the young nobleman's coat.

"Too prompt!" said Bernard Marsh aloud, turning towards the man who had fired. "Do you not stop for the countersign? Send Sergeant Loftus. We must have better discipline here."

Thus saying, he led Lucy and Lady Langdale into the inn, and holding up his finger as a warning against noise, for several of his companions were sleeping around, he bade the hostess conduct the two ladies upstairs, and see to their comfort, promising to join them in a few minutes. Lucy's hand lingered in that of her lover till they had reached the bottom of the stairs, and then it was withdrawn slowly, as if with regret, while even the eyes of Lady Langdale rested earnestly upon a face on which Lucette had, by this time, learned to read in characters not to be misunderstood, every generous and fine emotion. That countenance was now very grave, and with all a woman's quick apprehensions roused, Lady Langdale inquired in a low voice for her son.

"He is there," answered Bernard Marsh, point-

ing to one of the small beds let into the wall, "he is there, and quite well. Sir Edward, too, when last we heard, was well and in high spirits."

"But you are not in spirits, Bernard," said Lady Langdale.

"That reckless soldier firing directly at us, is enough to make one grave, dear lady," replied the young Earl; "but go up, and if possible change your dress. You are very wet. I will hardly give you time, indeed; for I am eager to hear what can have brought you and Lucy hither."

He smiled as he spoke; but ere he stood in the midst of the inn kitchen again, his face was graver than ever.

Little do those who are most dear to us know how terribly they sometimes add to our grief and our anxiety when they seek to share the dangers we ourselves must necessarily undergo. I can well conceive the brave man turning coward, the wise man becoming a fool, if forced to see perils which, borne alone, would shake neither heart nor mind, encountered by those to whom all his wisdom can afford no guidance, his courage no protection.

The room was crowded again when he returned; for besides the old man and his son, there were the four men who had arrived with the travellers, the sentry who had fired so unguardedly, and the man whom the young lord had called Sergeant

Loftus—one of those who on a former occasion has been seen with him in France.

“Relieve this sentinel, Loftus, and put him in arrest,” said the Earl. “Who is he, who in my troop fires his petronelle before the countersign can be given?”

“I don’t know, my lord,” replied the sergeant; “he joined us at Lyme, and is well commended by Sergeant Haldimand. Perhaps ’twas but a mistake, though he is old soldier enough to know better.”

“Put him in arrest,” repeated Lord Dartmoor. “I must have no such mistakes. The report of a pistol is heard far. I will inquire into the matter more at large to-morrow. Hark ye, Loftus,” and drawing him somewhat aside, he added, in a low voice, “watch Haldimand well; I doubt him. At the very first alarm, get the men under arms, and call me. A surprise in this indefensible place were fatal.”

“There is a good large barn behind, my lord,” said the sergeant, “with a door big enough for four horses to pass abreast. If people don’t bring cannon against it, we could make it good as long as we had food.”

“No,” said the young lord, thoughtfully; “but, at all events, if you can, pick out ten or twelve, who are not drunk, and send them up there with their horses bridled and saddled, ready for any

emergency. Put some old soldier at their head, who is fit to seize an occasion."

"I'm your man," said a voice proceeding from a thin, gaunt, elderly man in the corner, whom neither Loftus nor Lord Dartmoor had observed, but who now came forward and spoke somewhat over-loud.

"Ha, Pierrot la Grange!" said the Earl, "so you have come over with your lady. What said you just now? But speak low, man, speak low! see that fellow is creeping towards the door. Stand, friend! stand, and come back! Remember pistol bullets fly fast; and one will reach you ere you can get out."

The man turned doggedly and resumed his place in the middle of the room, while the young Earl continued his conversation with Pierrot and the sergeant.

"I say, my lord, I'm the man to put in the barn. First, because I'm an old soldier; and next, I am fit to seize an occasion. Only let me go at once; for if that brown jug stands looking me in the face, I shall be tempted once more, which were bad."

"Well, well then, go," said the Earl; "they can give you some beef out there, and you and Loftus can concert matters apart, only take good heed to the prisoner."

"He shall not give us leg-bail, I warrant, my

lord," said Sergeant Loftus. "I had my doubts too—though it is not fit for one soldier to speak against another."

Lord Dartmoor looked at him with a grave; almost a sad expression of countenance,—

"Alas, alas, Loftus!" he said; "that one principle, inherent as it is in human nature, linked to our hearts by our strongest and our feeblest sympathies, has done more to turn aside the course of well-appreciated duty than covetousness or ambition or treason. Our first duty, Loftus, is to our God, our next to our country, our next to our King, and he who, having just cause, fears to say, 'This man, my fellow-soldier, my friend, my bosom companion, is to the best of my judgment a traitor,' fails in the higher duty to subserve a lower claim. Why should not a soldier speak against a soldier, if he knows him to be false and treacherous? By the Lord above, if I thought my own brother harboured a thought against the cause we have both espoused, I would denounce him in face of earth and Heaven. But no more to-night. Guard the man well—look well to Haldimand. Weariness may overcome me, and I may sleep; but I shall wake at the least sound. Let me have the most timely notice you can give. Go with him, Pierrot. You have many of the best points of a soldier in you, and may give both good help and advice,"



Sergeant Loftus hung his head, and retired. He felt, indeed, that he was rebuked ; but that rebuke had been given with a tone and air which took all sting from reproof, and he determined that he would not close an eye that night if he fell from his horse with fatigue on the following day.

In the meantime, the good woman of the house had been busy with her new and, as it seemed, her favoured guests. She had hurried upstairs, with her serving wench and her caldron, not forgetting, however, before she went, to pour out a bowl of hot soup for her son and each of his comrades. A pair of saddle-bags had been brought in and carried to the rooms above ; and the old man had replenished the large stone jug from a barrel in the shed behind. Bernard Marsh stood for a moment or two in the midst of the kitchen, partly occupied with thoughts beyond my power to tell, partly with keen and rapid observation of the scene around him. He marked each door, each window in the room, glanced his eye over the thick, wooden shutters, and high lintels of the windows, saw every massive bolt and bar upon the gates, ran his eye over the faces of the waking men, and heard the hard breathing and measured snore of those who had fallen asleep.

"Let them slumber," said he to himself, "let them slumber ; I must wake, if I can. Yet, poor

human nature ; how the spirit is clogged by the weakness of the clay."

Thus thinking, he spoke a few kindly words to the old man's son, who was seated at the table enjoying, with the keen zest of hunger, his long delayed meal, and then took his way to the rooms above.

But there is no space to pause upon the explanations that were then given to him, or to relate how he was told that owing to the disturbed and ever changing state of parties in France, Mirepoix could afford no refuge to Madame de Langdale and her daughter, and how Belaye was actually in the hands of persons whose friendship was more than doubtful. He found that it had been judged by Sir Edward Langdale, as well as by themselves, that many parts of England would afford a much surer refuge than any place in France, and that he it was who had dispatched young John Grey to meet them at the coast, and conduct them as far as Evesham, towards which place Sir Edward was on his march from the eastern part of England.

Bernard said not one word of the anxiety—nay, the apprehension—which was produced in his own heart by what he thought, and thought rightly, the wild plunge which those he loved best had taken into the midst of a whirlpool of danger and difficulty ; nor did he let them see how much their

presence added to the embarrassment of one of the most difficult marches ever made across the country swarming with enemies. He spoke as cheerfully as Sir Edward had written, called their little party a "reinforcement," and promised boldly to escort them safely to join the father and the husband, though he saw all the perils and the impediments in their way.

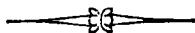
A few—a very few moments were given by him and Lucy to the sweet caress and the consoling words of love ; and then, telling them that they must march at daybreak on the following morning, he left them to their short repose, and descended to the room below.

He found it in the abode of sleep. The old man and his wife, with colder blood in their veins than the rest, were dozing by the fire ; their son and his three companions, finding every bed full, were slumbering round the table ; and the first party of cavaliers were still pouring forth their heavy breaths from the places where they had cast themselves down to rest.

Lord Dartmoor stood for a few minutes in the midst of the kitchen, in one of those moments of agitated thoughts which sometimes will banish the comforter from our eyes, however weary ; and he was just murmuring to himself the words, "No use, no use," when he thought he heard a step without, and raised his eyes to the door opening

upon the road. It was shut and did not move ; but at the little casement on the right hand, Bernard plainly saw the figure of a man, and could catch a gleam from the inside of the cottage, touching upon a steel cap and a cross belt. He moved not for a moment, and the expression of his face hardly changed ; but then, he advanced carelessly to the table, took a seat among the sleeping men, and folding his arms upon the board, leaned his head upon them, as if for slumber. A quarter of an hour passed, and he did not stir ; and then there was a slight movement of the door. It opened about the breadth of three fingers, and yet all was still. It creaked a little, and opened wider and wider, till at length the entire figure of a man was seen, the sharp, gray eyes under the heavy brow, running round the room, and seeming to count the sleepers.

But at that moment a hand, armed with a long horse-pistol, was raised above the table ; and ere the man could do aught but make a slight movement in retreat, Bernard Marsh had pressed the trigger. The hammer fell ; the report rang through the house ; and the steel cap clanged upon the brick floor.





## CHAPTER XIV

### SEARCHING THE SPY.

**T**HOUGH the sound of a pistol at some distance in open air, an hour or two before, had not been able to awaken the sleeping cavaliers, it was different with the report of a shot fired so close to them. Up from the table, out of the chairs around, forth from the little beds at the side, sprang the suddenly alarmed denizens of the inn kitchen, and with the readiness of men accustomed to hourly peril, each of them had some weapon in his hand, while in the midst stood Lord Dartmoor, with the pistol he had just fired still in his grasp, and the light, blue smoke of the explosion curling round him.

“What is it?” cried one.

“Who fired that shot?” asked another.

“Hush!” exclaimed the young Earl, holding up his hand with a gesture of stern command.

All was silent for a moment, and the more experienced soldiers knowing at once what their leader meant, bent the head and listened eagerly. Feet running past were soon heard, and then the galloping of a horse.

"I fired that shot," said the Earl, answering the last question. "Gentlemen, our march is betrayed! I had thought we might get to Evesham without fighting; for it were as well to bring up both men and horses fresh for the King's service; but doubtless we shall be able to give a good account of whatever body of rebels we may meet to-morrow. Lilburn and his men have gone far to the North, and are probably defeated ere now by the good Earl of Derby. Their force in these parts must be small. Some one take up that fellow and search his person. We may find proof upon him of who set him on, and also some information regarding the enemy. Henry," he added in a whisper to Lucy's brother, "creep quietly upstairs and see if any one is stirring there, awakened by this noise. If you find them awakened, reassure them. If all is still come down again."

"My lord, this looks like a cavalier," said one of those who had been raising the dead man; for dead he was, the bullet having passed right through his head.

"Then he looks not like what he was," replied Lord Dartmoor, approaching them; "he was a spy.

and doubtless a traitor. Do you not see his belt ? and that iron cap is London made, if ever I saw head-piece forged in Ivy Lane. If not, he was very unlucky ; for had he not worn it he might have escaped till another day. What is that paper, Colonel Parry ? Let me see !”

“ It seems some directions,” said the gentleman to whom he spoke, handing him the paper, “ not very well written, nor very well spelled.”

“ ‘ Bring the exact tale of the malignants,’ ” said the Earl, reading. “ ‘ Get some speech of Sergeant H——.’ (Sergeant Haldimand) on my life,— ‘ Give that godly man to know that his tidings were like the waters of’—what is this word ?— ‘ though bitter at first, may be sweetened hereafter. We have not God-fearing men enough at hand to smite the Amalekites to-day ; and the iron and the charcoal are wanting ; but if he can devise how to stay the swaggering idolaters for but four hours, we shall come upon their footsteps at the passage of the brook thou wottest of and slay them there. Fail not to bring the numbers as exact as may be, lest we fall into a snare ; and spread the tidings of our muster to all trusty men as thou passest along. Forget not, and let not our greedy fellow-soldier forget, that a reward of one hundred pounds is offered for the head of that viper, the Earl of D——, dead or alive. He sleeps little of nights, it is reported, and is apt to wander

like the lion, seeking whom he may devour. It were hard to take him alive; but a chance shot might do good service, and would have its reward.’”

The young Earl smiled as he read, and so did several of his party, as they listened to this description of their leader; and young John Grey suggested,—

“Will it not be better to hang up that scoundrel Haldimand, my lord? I have known him turn his jacket three times, if he be the man I think. Father has a good stout bit of rope in the shed. It may have worse work to do.”

“No,” answered Lord Dartmoor; “no, I judge not, John. By my honour, gentlemen, were the King’s business less pressing, I would willingly give these gentlemen an opportunity of coming up with the Amalekites. Methinks the writer of this unsigned paper is somewhat too confident, and if we did stay, the brook—that must be Sutton brook, some ten miles forward—might flow with other blood than ours. But that must not be. It has been a fault of many of our friends to forget the main object for some small advantage. The King by this time is in the very heart of the land, and every sword that can be drawn must hasten to him.”

“Hurrah for the King!” said several voices round.

“Hurrah for the King, and the devil take Oliver’s nose!” cried another.



“ The bankrupt brewer’s gone to bed,  
Gone to bed, gone to bed,  
The bankrupt brewer’s gone to bed,  
Hulla, hoa, ho !

“ The bankrupt brewer’s gone to bed,  
With a napkin round his head ;  
What care I if he were dead ?  
Hulla, hoa, ho ! ”

halloed out one of the cavaliers, whose short sleep did not seem to have completely cured the effect of his potations.

Lord Dartmoor seemed a good deal annoyed at the unseemly noise, and twice essayed to stop it, raising his hand, and crying,—

“ Hush, gentlemen ! hush ! ” Not alone, perhaps, that he thought the sounds would waken those above, but unwilling, also, that sweet Lucy Langdale should be made so harshly acquainted with the excesses of those with whom her father and her lover were forced to hold temporary companionship.

“ Silence, gentlemen,” he exclaimed at length, using a louder tone himself. “ You are probably breaking the rest of those whom, as cavaliers and gentlemen, you are bound to comfort and protect. You do not know that we have had other guests to-night besides yon traitor—ladies journeying to join their husband and father, as loyal a subject as King Charles the First or King Charles the Second ever had—the brave Sir Edward Lang-

dale. They go forward under our escort to-morrow morning ; but well I know that the presence of ladies never took the edge off a true gentleman's sword when it was drawn in their defence, and if we have to fight, we shall fight all the better because such eyes are looking upon us. Ah, Henry, has all this noise awakened them ? ”

“ Did you say my mother and my sister ? ” asked young Henry Langdale, eagerly catching, as he descended, the announcement the Earl had just made. “ No ; all was still above.”

“ So let it be. They need rest,” replied Bernard. “ Now, gentlemen, to council. Some one remove that spy ; but let his body be more strictly searched. You have heard that if we can be detained for a few hours the roundheads will be upon us, and perhaps in force. Though that unsigned paper is assuredly not the writing of a soldier, yet he may have some more practised people with him to-morrow. We must be upon our guard.”

“ Were it not better to march at once ? ” asked one of the by-standers.

“ No,” replied the Earl, almost haughtily. “ They shall not say I fled. We all want rest. The horses more than any. Let us go at the hour fixed, as if that paper had never fallen into our hands. We can have three hours more sleep ; but some one must see the sentries doubled round

our post ; he must pick the men, and make such arrangements that we be not taken at disadvantage."

"I will undertake that," said a hard-featured, elderly man ; "I know every one of these boys, or most of them, and what each is fitted for—who will doze, and who will have both eyes wide awake. But I was just thinking what your lordship says is true. They may try to take us by surprise. This dead fellow had a companion. I heard him gallop off just as I tumbled out of bed, and doubtless he will bring them up quicker than they proposed."

"Perhaps so, perhaps not," replied the Earl ; "these men were evidently not prepared for sudden action. I think, too, our party is more numerous than they imagined, and if their spy has found it so, his report may possibly deter them from any movement, especially when they know that his comrade has been killed or taken, and their purposes divulged to us. No, no ! They cannot be yet prepared. We have made as rapid a march as any on record, and have gained strength in almost every village. Unless some spite of fortune should have brought reinforcements for Cromwell this way, they have no force betwixt this and Worcester which we cannot cut through. But still we must miss no precaution. I thank you much, my good friend, for taking the

charge of the guard off my shoulders ; for I think I must have some rest. I have not slept to-night."

"Nor last night either," said the old soldier, gruffly. "I saw you steal out and go all the rounds when we were at the 'Horseshoe and Magpie.' How you manage it I know not. You are but a slim youth, and yet you do more work than any three men of twice your weight. Now, lads, all be quiet, and let the good lord have a little rest. I'll warrant he is up before any of you to-morrow."

The old man left the room, taking with him one of the younger officers ; and two of the other men carried the corpse of the dead soldier into the shed behind the house. There they again searched his person, but in vain ; nothing was found upon him but a small sum of money and a pack of well-thumbed cards, which showed, or seemed to show, that he was one of the loose characters who, in that age, floated between the two great parties, deceiving and betraying the one, and tolerated and employed by the other for certain serviceable qualities, which, in their eyes, like charity, covered a multitude of sins, the most repugnant to their saintly principles. Lord Dartmoor remained in quiet conversation with young Henry Langdale till they returned, while of the rest of the cavaliers, some sat and nodded on the seats around, some crept to their beds again, and soon were sound

asleep once more. The incident of the night passed as a matter of small moment to men whose whole life was spent in daily peril and excitement. A man had been killed—a life had gone out—an active, busy human existence, with all its feelings and sympathies, its faults and follies, and mayhap its virtues, too, had been extinguished ; but what was that to them ? They had seen many a man so die—they were ready so to die the ensuing day themselves. We get too soft in our closets ; the battle-field is the place to steel men's hearts against the enervating sympathies of this most mortal state of being.

What were the feelings of the Earl of Dartmoor ? His hand had fired the shot—his deliberate aim had taken the life of him who had just been carried out. His heart was as warm, and kind, and generous as any in the world—as unwilling to give pain, as liberal to afford pleasure, as tender of another's feelings, as careful of another's life ; but it was by no means weak. He had felt no hesitation when he fired ; he had felt no regret after it was done. He had done his duty. That was enough for him.





## CHAPTER XV.

### RECONNOITRING FOR THE ENEMY.

**T**HE sun, an early visitor—and often, alas! an unwelcome one at that time of year, was more than a hand's breadth below the horizon; but it had sent its messengers forward, in the shape of slanting rays, which fringed the edges of the brown clouds with gold, and spread a yellow and increasing gleam through the gray sky. The rain had ceased; the dawn was beautiful; the promise of the coming day as bright as hope. But yet there were the tears of yesterday upon the grass; drops fell slowly from the leaves of the stunted trees; and as the eye ranged over the moor, small ponds, swelled by the deluge of the night before, glistened in the growing light. It was calm, too. The wind, which, during the preceding evening had sported with the heavy water falling from the sky, as if to show

how the finer element can master the more dense, dashing it here and there where it sought not to go, had sunk to a profound calm ; and you could hardly see the leaves of the aspen quiver on the spray.

But it needed no pouring rain or gust of wind to rouse Lord Dartmoor. He was awake with the first ray ; and a soldier's toilet was soon made. A plentiful ablution, and no more was wanted : the fair hair, thrown back from the face, fell at once into its natural curls again ; and the pointed beard and long moustache needed no razor. The broad buff belt across his shoulders was soon thrown on, and the blue scarf, with its sword-knot, took no long time to adjust. The whole process, perhaps, might occupy ten minutes ; but while it was going on, any one—if any had been watching—might have seen that the form, apparently so slight and juvenile, was in reality one of great strength, that the chest was wide and expanded, the shoulders large and muscular, and that the arms, though somewhat long, were furnished with muscles clearly defined even to the eye, full of power and force. Each seemed distinct and separate, like the cordage of a vessel, but each was tremendously powerful in itself, and gave the idea both of vigour and activity.

While the sword was being examined and thrust back into the sheath, and the pistols received fresh

priming, Bernard Marsh gazed upon the sleeping companions around him, who had not been awakened by his preparations ; and though, perhaps, he might envy them in a degree the power of casting off so completely the load of thought, he could not but feel that, blessing though it be, this insusceptibility is a blessing of the lower order.

“ Well, let them sleep a little longer,” he said to himself ; “ ten minutes of such sleep as that is to them worth a world of anxious waking. The time allowed is not yet quite expired. Let them sleep. I am too impatient.

But Bernard Marsh was deceiving himself perhaps a little, or while exacting as strictly as circumstances permitted the punctual performance of duty, he was always willing to lighten the labour to others by taking the greater part of the burden upon himself ; and although he quietly woke Henry Langdale, and bade him go up and rouse his mother and sister, in order to prepare for marching as soon as the sun had really risen, he himself walked forth to visit the sentries, and give the necessary orders for early departure.

Seated on a stone mounting-block, between the house and the stables, he found the old soldier who had undertaken the watch during the last hours of darkness. The good man could hardly be said to be asleep, though he was nodding. It was the slumber, if slumber it was at all, of the



large house-dog, ready to spring in a moment at the throat of an enemy who had perhaps fancied himself unseen. He started up the moment his leader's step was near him ; but there was neither any appearance of drowsiness, nor any attempt to conceal or excuse it. He neither stretched, nor yawned, nor complained of the heavy fatigue of the last four days' march ; but merely told the Earl that all had gone well, though Sergeant Haldimand had seemed very uneasy.

"Let all the men be roused," said the Earl, "the horses saddled, and the party ready to start in half an hour. But, my good friend, let the priming of every pistol be seen to, and every sword easy in the sheath. I have a feeling that we may have to draw them. It may be but a fancy, but these are times when precaution is never useless."

"It is useless in no times," said the other ; "that Haldimand would have been off twice this last night, if you had not taken precautions ; but he vows it is all because he will not be suspected, and that he will not serve with your troop, if you do not feel confidence in him. If I were you, I would shoot him before we go. It would save trouble now and hereafter."

Lord Dartmoor smiled, and shook his head, saying,—

"Waste of powder, Master Clarke, waste of powder ! You are not economical. We may make

him shoot some of his friends before the day is over, and perhaps make them shoot him ; so there will be a double saving. But, as I have said, get all the men under arms, and in the saddle ; those in the barn have their horses ready. Send up the ladies' horses first. Then bring up the rest. Remember, you have but half an hour."

"It is done, my lord ! it is done," said the old soldier ; "there is only one thing more I wished to say. If I should be tumbled over the crupper, by a chance shot, remember I have a boy about fourteen, at South Meam. You take care of him. His mother, God made an angel of, six years ago. You take care of him ; breed him up to love his King, and show him how to live as I have lived, and die as I died."

The Earl pressed his hand firmly ; and the good soldier felt that pressure was as good as a vow. The young lord then took his way towards the house again, and in the kitchen gave manifold orders, which, in a regularly organized force, might well have been spared ; but though all, or most, were soldiers who had seen some service, yet all were volunteers who had obeyed a sudden call to follow him in the King's need ; and if I may use the term, had not yet "jostled into their places" in the regiment he had been raising.

There were few supernumeraries there. Accustomed to attend upon himself, Lord Dartmoor's

own domestics aided to swell the ranks of his fighting men ; and the only attendance required by their lord was the care of his horses. All were by this time busy in the inn ; one man had wakened another, and though there were those who yawned, and those who scratched the head, each had made some progress towards that renewed activity which was the life of every day. Henry Langdale was not present, having gone up to arouse his mother and sister ; and the good dame of the house and her husband were busy in preparing all they could supply for some food for the soldiers before they marched. Young Grey was up, and was leaving the door just as Lord Dartmoor entered, and a great deal of eager bustle was going on about the stables, where so many of the troopers had been sleeping.

“Well, Henry, how have they slept ?” asked the Earl at the foot of the stairs, meeting his young protégé just as he was about to descend ; “are they getting ready quickly ?”

“They are as busy as newly-wakened bees,” answered Henry ; “are you going up to see them ?”

“As I come down,” said Bernard Marsh ; “for I am going to the top of the house, to take a look over the country round. It is flat and bare enough till we get to Woodford Bridge, if I remember right ; but it is still as well to examine the way,

for the barrenness which lets us see, will also let us be seen. You go down and keep the men alert, Henry. The sun, you see, is just above the edge of the sky."

Thus saying, he passed on, reached the little corridor—in a room issuing from which Lady Langdale and Lucy had passed the night—mounted another short flight of steps, and having learned the position of the trap-door from the good dame below, issued forth upon the roof. It was somewhat dangerous climbing ; for as was then almost universal in England, the angles were acute and many ; but at length the young Earl reached a point from which he could see all around.

The view was very extensive on three sides. It was not exactly a purely English landscape ; for its principal features were exceptional ; but it was a landscape very characteristic of England. The sun, as Lord Dartmoor had said, had just burst above the horizon, and spread his early rays over the whole scene, too feeble as yet to raise the deluge of the night before, even into the light mists that often hang about the first footsteps of the morn, yet bright enough to change every drop upon the trees or on the grass into the semblance of liquid rubies. On one side—the side by which the young Earl and his troop had come—the view was cut off by some wooded ground and hedge-rows ; but about that he cared very little ; for that

part of the country he knew to be loyal, and there was no chance of pursuit from that quarter. On the three other sides, spread the flat moor of which we have spoken heretofore. Those who have travelled much in Worcestershire and its neighbourhood must well remember it; for it offers a remarkable contrast to the pleasant undulations of that most charming country, and though there are slight inequalities—a dell here and there—a little monticule, flanked with dark firs—a craggy belt of wood—a sand-pit—or a low ridge of barren gravel—he who mounts up even to the roof of a low house, can see over the whole heath, and note an object not much bigger than a lap-dog.

One general glance, and then slowly and deliberately the Earl's eye ran over the whole extent of the plain, as it spread out from a line about two miles from him to the limit of the horizon, where some hedge-rows and dark trees showed that cultivation and fertility were once more prevalent. Gradually the circle of his glance became narrower and narrower, left the wide plain, and scanned the country nearer to the spot on which he stood.

That little inn, as I have shown, was the last outpost of man's industry, as it were, upon the outskirts of the waste. There was the house itself, which probably derived four-fifths of its custom from being the last place for repose or refreshment before crossing the river; there were the stables,

but a short distance off, the shed behind, two or three little out-buildings of no great consequence, and the large barn, standing a good deal farther back to the east. Between the barn and the stables was a considerable kitchen-garden, and a field of peas, not yet ripe. There were various little groups of trees scattered around, and one long, low copse of osiers, with a small stream running through it, which began, Heaven knows where, and terminated at the same distance, forming a narrow line which marked the commencement of the actual moor. Near the stables and near the house were several groups of soldiers, and one or two men were hanging about the sheds, while some foreign-looking servants held the horses which had brought the two ladies during the night before, and were endeavouring to put the weather-stained caparisons in somewhat decent trim.

Such was the scene that met the eyes of Lord Dartmoor, when first he looked forth. What is it he sees now, which makes his look change and his eye strain upon a low dip in the moor, about a quarter of a mile distant? It is that small gleaming line which looks like a serpent creeping towards where he stands, while that little row of men's heads in steel caps, upon the left, seems coming up to meet them?

He pauses to count, to calculate. They are not many. Some two hundred men in all. But then,

behind that line of osiers, there is a gleam of corselets and buff coats coming on quick—at a sharp trot.

No time is to be lost. In five minutes they will be before the inn. But five minutes in love or war is everything.





## CHAPTER XVI.

### OVERTAKEN BY THE ENEMY.



FEW steps—there were hardly three—brought the Earl of Dartmoor to the little, narrow, deal-lined corridor, in one of the rooms branching from which Lucy and her mother had passed the night. The door was open, as were several others, and from the latter some figures were seen passing towards the top of the stairs which descended to the kitchen. Young Henry Langdale stood quietly talking to his mother and sister, and the maid appeared tranquilly placing some travelling apparel in large leathern saddle-bags.

The peacefulness of the scene formed a strange contrast with the impetuous haste which had possession of the young Earl's bosom—ay, and even with that which his countenance displayed.

“Good Heaven! Bernard, what is the matter?” exclaimed Lucy, the moment she saw him. “Something has gone wrong.”



"Keep to your room, dear girl," replied her lover. "The enemy is upon us. Go not near the windows, whatever you may hear; but remain quietly seated till I send for you. Stay with them, Henry; you shall have others with you in a moment. Throw the beds across the windows, and keep the ladies out of fire."

He was turning to depart; but seeing the terror in Lucy's face, he added a word of comfort,—

"These men are not many," he said; "we will soon dispose of them."

Then bounding down the stairs into the midst of the cavaliers, who, some wholly and some half-dressed, were effacing the remnants of sleep by applications to old John Grey's stone bottle, he exclaimed aloud,—

"Arm! arm, my friends! The roundheads are coming round the copse in force. Bar up the windows. Hark, young John Grey, can you—dare you run like lightning to the barn? Here, take this order," and he wrote in pencil, with a rapid hand, a few words upon a scrap of paper, torn from his pocket-book. As the young man sprang forward to receive his commands, the young Earl added,—"You, Luke, speed to the stable. Bring up what men are ready, and all the powder and ball you can find. Some horses, too, to the shed, where that dead fellow lies, if you have time; but remember, you have not a

moment to spare. In three minutes they will be upon the green. Surrender?" he continued, turning sharply round; "who talks of surrender? Were they ten to one, here would I lose my life, or here would I win it. Quick, boy, quick! Time is everything."

The young man ran forth to obey his orders; and the Earl, turning instantly to the rest, gave directions for securing all access to the house, placed sentries at the door of the shed and at the back door of the inn, took measures for assuring immediate support to any point that might be attacked, and placed as many men as he could collect at every window.

"We have nothing but our pistols, my lord," said one of the cavaliers; "if we had but the horses, we might do something."

"We will do something without the horses," said Bernard Marsh, in a confident tone. "This day and this place shall be famous in story, if each man does well his duty to his King. Reserve your fire, my men. Let each shot tell. He who now throws away an ounce of lead is a spendthrift. You, Harding and Moresby, see to the ordering of the men. I saw a ladder without there. Let it be brought in. We must not let them get at the upper windows. I must go out before the door, to see what is going on."

Though all was spoken with extreme rapidity,

every order was clear and precise, and from the confidence of all around in their young leader, was obeyed with readiness and punctuality. The lower part of each window was blocked up with whatever was nearest at hand. Stools, tables, benches were brought forward, to enable the little garrison to fire from the small spaces left above; and as many as could stand upon such frail platforms were posted so as to have the most advantageous aim at an approaching enemy.

"I could not count them, gentlemen; but they cannot be two to one," said Lord Dartmoor, with his hand upon the door, "and they can have no cannon. They had not time, for all they had ready prepared have gone north. Surely two cavaliers are equal to one roundhead."

He paused a single moment, as if to calm his unusual excitement, and then opening the door of the inn, went forth.

All was as yet tranquil before the inn. There was the little green, with its flock of solitary goslings, stretching their long necks and biting at the short grass; there were the two or three scraggy trees, still dripping with yesterday's rain; there was the troop of cocks and hens strutting about in the morning sunshine, while chanticler's shrill clarion seemed to crow defiance to all enemies. But all else was quiet, except where at the stable were seen some men running across towards the

inn with armfuls of carbines, and others hauling along bagfuls of powder and bullets. Two or three were also seen bringing forward horses, or pausing to put their accoutrements in order. At the barn, somewhat farther distant, all was still, except that a man once or twice put his head forth and looked out for a moment.

"Take them in and distribute them," said the Earl to the lads who were carrying the powder and balls: "are any of the men coming up?"

"Yes, my lord," said one of the young men, "Sergeant Haliday's guard is all ready but their banderols, and will be here in a moment."

"Go in, then, and stay there," said the leader; "each man must be a General now, especially if I fall. If so, Strange commands you, remember. We want some horses much. Those fellows are delaying too long."

At that moment there was the sound of a trumpet on the road; and the head of the enemy's advance began to appear; but at the distance of some two hundred yards the troops halted as if to reconnoitre; and some of the cavalier horses were hurried rapidly across the green, and led to the shed at the back of the inn, while a body of some twenty men, well armed and in good order, marched deliberately, as if they were on parade, from the stables to the house.

Lord Dartmoor looked once or twice into the

inn kitchen, where all presented itself as might have been expected, the young men bustling and active with somewhat ill-directed exertions, the old soldiers calm and stern, looking out from time to time to see what was going on, and then turning quietly to their work again, as if they neither feared nor cared much for the result.

"This little brush is lucky," said Lord Dartmoor to one of the younger soldiers, who showed more restless anxiety than he liked ; "it will teach you to be cool, and will make better soldiers for King Charles on a more important day. Go in—close the door ; do not lock it, you foolish boy ! I am not going to fight all those fellows alone."

As he spoke, the sound of a trumpet was heard from the other side of the green, and three horsemen were seen advancing slowly abreast ; one of them carrying a white flag. Lord Dartmoor stood calmly before the door, with his arms crossed upon his chest, while some more horses were run across the open space behind him.

"We would speak with a man calling himself the Earl of Dartmoor," said an old weather-beaten officer, in a buff coat and cuirass. "Will you lead us to him ?"

"Your journey need be but short," said the young nobleman. "I am he. What is your business with me ?"

"Thou ? thou ?" said the other. "Thou art but

a youth. 'This is a famous soldier, though, unhappily for himself and his country, a bitter malignant.'

"Whether famous or not, whether malignant or not," replied Bernard Marsh, "I am that Earl of Dartmoor of whom you speak. What would you with me?"

"Well, then," replied the old man, "I think thou wouldst not lie to me; and I answer, we bear you a flag of truce, hoping to spare the effusion of Christian blood this day."

"I never lie," replied the Earl, "be that for others. What have you to propose?"

"Good quarter," answered the other, "and what we can do for thee with the Parliament, seeing thou makest no resistance. We have thee in a snare, young man; and it were better for thee to yield to force thou canst not resist."

"The partridge is caught in the net," answered Lord Dartmoor; "the eagle or the falcon breaketh through. Such is your proposal. Now hear mine. I will give you ten minutes to retire from that road; and I will not pursue you nor attack you on your march, if you behave sweetly and discreetly, as you call it yourself; but if you retire not, and show any signs of waylaying me and my men, the consequences be on your head."

"So be it," replied the other; "understand, I summon thee to surrender. Sayst thou yea or nay?"

"Nay," answered the young Earl, calmly, "and now, sir, enough of flags of truce. You have sent one ; and I have received it. I warn you to send no more ; for more I will not receive. You had better retire, for your men are advancing your line, which mine are not likely to tolerate."

"They do so but to give Captain Shorefield's corps time to come up," answered the other. "However, I have your answer, and I go," and seeing another small party advancing from the stables, it might be towards the house, it might be to cut off his retreat, the old gentleman made a retrograde movement towards his own people with no slight haste.

Now there can be no doubt that in every class of the Parliamentary army there were men of as high courage and as great military skill as the world ever saw ; but it is certain that, in the haste and confusion with which reinforcements were sometimes levied, people of very different qualities crept in, and very often a force which looked well on paper, and, perhaps, might be drilled into an efficient corps, was found in the beginning to be incompetent. Moreover, in that army, as in most others, there were to be found persons whose genius was assuredly not military, whom nature, age, or circumstances had rendered somewhat nervous, but who, seeking distinction, wealth, or fame, occasionally took arms on the side of the dominant party,

and could screw their courage to the sticking point so far as to go through scenes most abhorrent to them without showing too prominently the weakness which in reality beset them. Many of these men rose to respectable positions; and zeal, in what was considered the good cause, covered the frailties which might otherwise have been disastrous to themselves. That they were sometimes disastrous to the side with which they had taken part, none who reads the history of those times can doubt; but the genius and vigour of Cromwell and several of the Parliamentary officers, and the insubordination and rashness of many of the bravest cavaliers, more than compensated for any deficiency on the part of the commonwealth.

But, bred from his infancy almost to arms, and keen in his observation of human nature, Bernard Marsh had speedily concluded that the old man who had come forward with the flag of truce, notwithstanding his calm and assured demeanour, was one of those who, imagining he saw an easy success before him, had put himself forward to cut off a small party of royalists, without either much experience in war or much vigour of character; and his hasty retreat to the head of his troop confirmed that impression. The Earl's eye, too, running over the line of the enemy, at once detected in them unmistakable signs of a fresh and undisciplined levy. Here a suit too big for the man who wore it, there



a horse evidently taken from the plough or the cart, a gap in the line at this place, a crowd at that, showed plainly that he had raw recruits before him; and, though he doubted not that there were older and better soldiers among them, he turned towards the house again with better assurance than he had gone forth. "One moment of panic," he thought, "and they are all gone."

On entering the inn, he found it filled with soldiers. Every window was garnished with as many men as it could afford room for, and some had even climbed up to the top of the house, and were prepared with pistol and gun to give any attacking party a warm reception.

"How many men," he asked, "are still in the stable?"

"Some forty, sir," replied one of his troopers: "they thought they could not get across with the horses."

"Better where they are," replied the Earl, "if they do but act at the proper moment. Here, take this order—run for your life, and do not return."

A few words were again written on a scrap of paper; but Bernard stopped the man for an instant, asking,—

"Who commands there?"

"Strange, my lord," replied the soldier.

"A good man!" said the Earl; "all is safe.

Tell him we will scatter those men in five minutes, if they do not move off without fighting—now, quick! give him that.”

The man departed and ran across the green, and though a few shots were fired at him ere he reached the stables, the Earl watched him from the door and saw him enter unhurt.

“Now, lock and bar that door,” said the Earl, “and let the men at the side windows take care no one comes near it with petard or powder-bag. I go up for a moment to watch their next movements. We shall soon put yon flock of sparrows to flight, or I am mistaken—Hal Luxmore, get a ladder, if one can be found, to the light above the door. You can have two guns there.”

Thus saying he began to mount the stairs, and perhaps it may be forgiven him, even by the most military reader, if we confess that he paused for a moment at the door of Lucy Langdale’s room, and just put his head in, saying,—

“Fear not, my love. Those men, though rather more numerous than we, are nothing but raw recruits. They will soon be disposed of.”

She answered not, but merely pressed his hand; and with a nod to Henry, and a brief word of encouragement to the men who were standing at the window with him, the young Earl climbed up to the roof.

The roundheads had, as yet, made no forward

movement ; and at first there seemed a good deal of confusion among them ; but after gazing for a minute or two, Lord Dartmoor saw some fifty of the troopers dismount. A party of ten or twelve in scattering order then advanced towards the inn, while the rest of those on foot followed in firm array about twenty yards behind the first, and the cavalry wheeled upon the green, both covering their rear and menacing the stables. For a moment the young Earl continued to watch them ; then, saying to himself, " There are better soldiers among them—this must be looked to," he sprang down the stairs into the kitchen.





## CHAPTER XVII.

### A WARM RECEPTION.

“**N**OW, steady, my men !—steady !” said the Earl of Dartmoor, entering the kitchen of the inn, “not a shot till I give the order! Balls thrown away have lost more than one battle in these sad wars. Lacy, come down from that window, and let me get up. Fie, man, your hand shakes!”

“It is with eagerness, then, my lord,” replied the man, making way ; “let me give them one shot, at least.”

“When you are less eager,” replied the Earl ; “it is not eagerness we want, but coolness. You could not hit the stable-door just now. Calm yourself, man ; and you shall come up as soon as I have seen the effect of the first fire.”

Thus saying, he climbed upon the table and looked out. The dismounted troopers were ad-

vancing steadily and in good order ; and were apparently men who had seen some service.

“ They are detaching men to the right and left,” said the Earl ; “ mark them well, and let them not get round the house. There is our weak point. Hold ! not yet, not yet ! cover them well.”

He paused, holding up his hand to enforce obedience ; and then followed a moment or two of profound silence, while with a heavy tramp, increasing in quickness as they approached the house, the enemy came on. When they were so near that the whites of their eyes could be seen, and each man raised his firelock to aim at the heads they saw at the windows, the Earl dropped his hand, exclaiming, “ Fire !” and at once a volley poured forth which told with terrible effect. Some six or seven of the assailants rolled upon the ground at once. Others were evidently hit, but more slightly ; but both those who were wounded and those who were untouched, fell back in dismay upon the body behind, carrying confusion with them.

“ Load, load !” cried Bernard Marsh ; “ they will soon form again. Here, give me a carbine. It is long shot, but I will try it ;” and aiming deliberately at the head of the body of cavalry, he fired. The ball dropped somewhat in its course—for arms were anything but perfect in those days—and missing the rider, struck the horse of the

man apparently in command of the troopers. The poor beast reared, rushed madly among the ranks, and then fell, rolling over upon his master, around whom a good deal of bustle was observed, as his followers strove to raise him, and carry him to the rear. That shot seemed a signal to the men in the stables, for a sharp fire was opened at once, from the doors and the small windows which faced the green, upon the flank of the cavalry; but in the meanwhile the great body of foot, who were advancing to support the advance, soon rallied from their temporary disarray and came on at quick time.

"Here, Lacy, come up now," said Bernard, "you can stand here. Calmly, calmly, my man!"

And he stooped down to aid him up to the top of the table on which he himself was placed. But just as the young man reached the top, a ball passed the window, and struck him on the head. With a convulsive spring, but without a word, he fell back; and Bernard Marsh, catching the carbine from his hand as he fell, turned to the window. There was some thin smoke curling round a man in the front rank of the advancing party, and the carbine was instantly levelled towards him.

"That man is too good a shot to fire any more," said Bernard Marsh, as he pressed the stock to his shoulder so tight, that the barrel seemed to trem-

ble. It could have shaken but little, however ; for the next instant the man who had fired was rolling on the ground.

"Poor fellow!" said the young Earl, jumping down from the table, and looking at Lacy, "he would have made a good soldier when he got over his cagerness. God be with him! Lay him on yonder bed. Now, gentlemen, we can get more bullets to each window, I think. Draw a little back those two mattresses. That will give six more guns. No one will care for scorching his hose for life, liberty, and King Charles. So fire between our friends here ; but mind that every ball be true. If I see one ball fail, I shall think that he who fired it was afraid. It must be nearly time to give them another volley. What are they doing, Ingoldsby?"

"They seem consulting, my lord," replied the man whom he addressed. "They have stopped in their advance, and are pointing up at the house."

"Let them not pass that little path which crosses the green," said Lord Dartmoor. "I must see to the horses in the shed ; for we shall soon have to come to closer quarters with them. In the meantime, I trust to you to keep them back ; for," he added with a laugh, "I am terribly afraid, as you may see ; and if they pass the corner, they may make me prisoner, which I should not like."

The mind, there can be no doubt, is more susceptible of infection than the body, and the high and well-assured tone of their leader added not a little to the courage and determination of men who were anything but defective in those qualities.

"Where is the cornet, old man?" asked the Earl, speaking in a low voice to the landlord of the house, who had remained below, while his wife had gone up to comfort the ladies, after her fashion; "one was brought here, I saw. The other is most likely at the stables."

"It is there, my lord; it is there," he answered, "in the corner behind the cupboard. But, alackaday! I fear me it is a bad case."

"A bad case!" said Bernard, almost scornfully; "in ten minutes you shall see those men flying along the road. Hark! there is another volley. How many are down, Ingoldsby?"

"I cannot see for the smoke, my lord," replied the man, "but I think not less than nine. Stay. Two have got round the house, and a petard with them. For Heaven's sake, look to the back door."

"Take care of them here; leave the others to me," said the Earl. "Give them another shot while they are in confusion. Load quick there below; you can surely load as quick as they can fire;" and he hurried at once to the shed behind



the house. There he found the horses, some thirteen or fourteen in number, quietly munching some hay at the rack ; but at the wide door were gathered seven or eight men with carbines in their hands, one of whom was leaning against the door-post, with his weapon pointed at some one apparently coming up, while one of his companions had a hand laid lightly on his shoulder, and was whispering in his ear. The man to whom he spoke quietly motioned him back, and the young Earl paused short ere he reached him, saying,—

“Coolly, coolly!”

There was an instant of perfect silence, and then the sharp crack of the carbine.

“He is over!” said the man who had fired; “I never miss my mark, at a cool hundred.”

And looking forth, Bernard saw that what he said was true. The man carrying the petard was on the ground ; but his companion was unscathed, and running back to his companions on the green. Perhaps the leader would not have objected that he should carry with him the tidings that all sides of the house were well guarded ; but three or four shots were at once fired over the Earl's shoulder, and the roundhead, whoever he was, retreated slowly with a dishonourable wound.

“Well aimed,” said Bernard Marsh. “I trust the defence of this post to you. I see you have the horses safe. Some of you put on the saddles,

and see that the ladies' horses be girthed up tight. In about ten minutes we shall have to attack those fellows in front and disperse them. We must not let them waste all our ammunition."

"They are not firing from the barn, my lord," said the man to whom he spoke; "I have not seen a puff of smoke from that quarter; and only one volley from the stables."

"They do well," replied the young Earl, "they obey orders. In a few minutes you will see more. Only guard this spot surely. It is our weakest point. You have the post of honour."

"But they are not firing from the upper windows either, sir," rejoined the man; "at least I think so—and I have looked out three or four times."

"That is a mistake," said Bernard, "I gave the order; but the men were hurried, and may have forgotten it. I will go and see."

Thus saying, he left them, and hurried back into the house. He there found the soldier's information true. No men had been placed at the upper windows; but the defect was soon remedied, and six more bullets were poured upon the enemy as they advanced again to the attack. But though they came on boldly and in tolerable order, it was evident to so practised an eye as Lord Dartmoor's, that they were disheartened, as much, perhaps, by the perfect inactivity of their horse, as by their own want of success. Again they recoiled, and this time they fell back almost to the feet of the horses;

but there they rallied, and an eager conversation took place between the foot and some of the mounted men.

“They will come on once more,” said the Earl, “but it will be their last attack. Load carefully, and fire deliberately. In five minutes our turn will come. Each man be ready at a moment’s warning to issue forth to the attack. Those troopers will run in a moment. All their old soldiers are dismounted in front. I go up to the roof. Listen for the trumpet, and when it sounds dash out upon the enemy. If you do not win a complete victory to-day I am much in error.”

He took the cornet, or flag of a troop of horse from the corner in which it had been placed, beckoned to a young man who stood near with a trumpet in his hand to follow him, and mounted the stairs. For one moment he again paused at the door of Lucy Langdale, and looked in. She and her mother were on their knees by the side of the bed, while Henry and the men were standing at the window. Bernard threw his arm gently round her, saying,—

“Fear not, my love—fear not! Those men will be flying in five minutes. Henry, get all ready to depart, and when you hear the trumpet lead Lucy and your mother down to the shed I showed you. You will find the horses there. Mount and follow with these good men. Let me and the rest sally forth first. We will clear the green of the rebels

for you in a minute. They are already shaken, and know not whether to stand or run. One good charge, and they are gone. But wait for the trumpet ere you go down. Fear not, my love—fear not!”

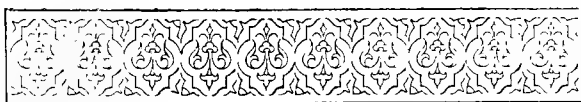
“It was for you I was praying, Bernard,” said Lucy; but at that moment came the sound of a loud volley, both from the room below and that opposite, and Lord Dartmoor darted up the stairs to the roof of the house.

The scene below was one he was pleased to see. The body of roundhead musketeers was sadly diminished, and in complete confusion, and it would seem that a party of the cavalry having turned upon the stables had been received by a fire so true and well directed, that it had not only thrown the young levy into disarray, but actually put them to flight, and a considerable body was galloping down the lane as fast as they could go.

Bernard seized the cornet from the hands of the trumpeter, and shook it from the parapet of the house, crying,—

“Blow! blow a charge with all your might!”

The next instant the shrill, inspiring sound of a cavalry charge was ringing over the green, the great barn doors were thrown open, and out darted the royalist horse upon the flank of the enemy. But Bernard Marsh did not wait to see. Ere the last trooper had left the barn, he was down the stairs, in the shed, and upon his horse.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### PURSUIT AFTER VICTORY.

**H**URRIED rapidly down the little stairs, and mounted on her horse, she hardly knew how, with her bridle rein in the hand of her brother, and young John Grey by her mother's side, Lucy Langdale opened her large, dark eyes upon the scene on the green before her. All for a moment seemed confusion, of which she could make nothing—men and horses inextricably confounded, swords flashing, guns' firing, and clouds of smoke rolling along with the light wind. But soon she saw the figure of him she loved best on earth, followed by her old friend Pierrot, and a stout man she knew not, driving his charger into the midst of a body of foot, and with uplifted arm smiting right and left with blows which never fell in vain. Forth from the door of a long range of wooden buildings opposite poured a line of

men, some mounted, but most on foot, firing as they came up, while a considerable body of cavalry were seen galloping as if for life down the lane which led to the more cultivated country on the left; and amidst the whole appeared a number of figures of what party she could not discover, catching stray horses, lifting wounded men from the ground, or in separate groups waging a hand-to-hand fight with some of those whose determined courage resisted to the last.

The din was deafening, for there were many sounds—discharging of musketry, and separate pistol shots, and loud cries of command, and shrieks of wounded men, and the braying of the trumpet; but above all were heard the clear melodious tones of the young leader, giving his orders apparently as calmly as if he were speaking in a saloon.

“Mount, mount, my men, and pursue those fugitives along the road!” cried Bernard Marsh to the men who were issuing from the stables, “do not follow too far; but let them not form again for a mile or two. Leave these to us. Charge that body on the right, Loftus! They are rallying—keep back, Henry Langdale! Don’t you see they are turning your flank? Charge those in front, Harding! By the Lord, they will cut him off!” and suddenly wheeling his horse he spurred towards the spot where Lucy and her

mother were coming up. Lucy closed her eyes, for a dozen of the musketeers were at once upon her brother. She felt his hand let go her rein, and a shot, and a scream from her mother, with a wild whirl of objects round her told that something terrible had happened. But when she opened her eyes again, the first objects she saw were Henry's horse rolling on the ground, he himself prostrate near, with a musketeer standing over him, and Bernard Marsh, with his sword high in air, dealing a blow at the foot soldier's neck. It was none too soon ; for the musket only hung fire for a moment, and as the man fell with his head nearly severed from his shoulders, the piece went off, and the ball passed between Lucy and her mother.

"Up and mount another horse, Henry!" cried the Earl, turning his charger upon the other musketeers. "Catch that beast, John ; follow more slowly ; let the green be cleared !" and he galloped on, but the foot stood not to resist. Defeated, dispirited, they fled across the little open space, clambered over the gates and hedge, and seemed to have no thought but of escaping from the fiery pursuit behind them.

John Grey caught without difficulty the horse of one of the troopers who had fallen, and aided Henry Langdale, sorely bruised and shaken, to re-mount ; and slowly the little party began to

move forward again till they reached the high road. Lady Langdale rode up to her son's side, eagerly inquiring if he was hurt, and Lucy asked many questions too, but her eyes, it must be confessed, wandered to other parts of the scene, where the form of Bernard Marsh appeared whirling about, now here, now there, driving the scattered fragments of the roundhead force before him, and never giving them even a moment to attempt a rally again. The only body, indeed, which showed any disposition to do so, was composed of the old foot soldiers ; but so complete had become the panic, that many even of these threw away their muskets to escape more easily, and scarcely a horseman was now in sight.

It was indeed a fearful scene for poor Lucy Langdale, when at length she and her mother drew up their horses on the road some seventy yards from the inn door. Dead and dying were scattered thickly about, and wounded horses were seen on every side, expiring in mute patience, or struggling up for a moment in the agonies of death, and falling back again with a convulsive plunge. Seldom, in so small a space, and with so few men engaged on either side, had a more bloody field been fought ; and long afterwards—ay, even in the present day—has it been remembered as “the bloody skirmish of Goose Green.”

All the sights turned the poor girl faint, and



she now for the first time had a full idea of those horrors of war which she had often heard of, but never before seen.

Young John Grey marked the fading colour in her cheek, and while her mother endeavoured to encourage her with words of comfort, he called it a glorious victory ; producing no answer but a faint shake of the head. The lad rode off to the inn, calling upon his father, old John, to bring something to restore the young lady. The old man not very willingly looked forth, and ventured a little way out when he saw that the green was cleared, but his good wife bustled forward and approached Lucy's side with a glass and a bottle of water, saying, "Take some of this, my dear, it would be better if it were stronger ; but the men have drunk us all out. It is the same with all of them ; the cavaliers drink and sing, and the round-heads pray and drink ; but there is many a one of them who will neither pray nor drink after this day."

"Where is Lord Dartmoor ?" asked Lucy, faintly ; "I do not see him now."

"He is gone up the lane, my lady, driving the last of those men before him, I fancy to stop them from rallying on the moor. He won't leave them as long as there are two of them together. I saw him ride by from the window. I fancy these folks will not meddle with him again. It's like fingering melted lead, they say, to touch him."

By degrees, some eight or ten of the men who had scattered in pursuit of the fugitives came in, and gathered round Lady Langdale and her family. Some were slightly wounded, others were untouched ; but all were soiled with smoke and dirt. And after gazing for a moment at them abstractedly, Lucy said, in a low voice, " Had we not better dismount, mother, and take some care of the wounded."

" Assuredly, my child. It is well bethought," answered Lady Langdale ; and dismounting from their horses, they proceeded to offer what aid they could to any of the poor creatures whom they found lying round. Some received that service kindly ; others repulsed them with hard words, even in the midst of agony ; and assuredly many a horrid and sickening sight had poor Lucy to see ; but, on the whole, the exertion did her good ; and she could hardly believe that half an hour had passed when one of the soldiers came up to her, saying, " I hear the trumpet blowing the recall, my Lady. The Earl will be up in a minute now. We had better get ready to march. I know there is no time to spare."

" Let us do all we can," answered Lucy ; " I will mount as soon as he bids me."

" In the meantime," said Lady Langdale, " cannot some one bring water ? all these poor creatures complain of intolerable thirst."

Water was soon brought ; and those two fair creatures went round, aided by the maid, raising the cool drink to many a parched lip. That was a boon not to be refused even by the most fierce and fanatical of the wounded men ; and the two ladies were still in the execution of the most blessed task that can fall to human hands when Bernard Marsh rode up, followed by about one-third of his horse-men, with the heat and excitement of victory and pursuit still flashing in his eye and glowing on his cheek.

“Sound the recall ! Loud, loud as you can blow !” said the young leader to the trumpeter behind him. “We have no time to spare. We must be across the moor before any of these men can rally. It has been a glorious day—but,” he added as he cast his eyes over the green, “this is a sad spectacle ;” and as he caught sight of Lucy and Lady Langdale, he added, to himself, in a lower voice, “They teach me a duty.”

He dismounted from his horse quietly but quickly, for the impetuous part of his character had come out in that fierce brief strife, and could not be mastered in a moment.

“Bring out all the horses and all the ammunition,” he said, speaking to one of the officers behind him. “Let nothing be left which can be useful. Strange, I must leave that task to you. I must see that some care is taken of these poor

wretches. I believe that none of our men are seriously wounded. Their shots at the windows told too fatally to leave the misery of a lingering death. Young Lacy went at once and hardly felt the blow ; but I saw two others fall in the house, and their state must be seen to. Gather all the cavalry in order upon the green, ready to act on either road. Sound a recall ! cannot you blow louder ?”

“You gallop so fast, my lord,” said the man, “you leave one no breath ;” but without any answer, Lord Dartmoor turned away. He paused near Lucy Langdale, however, saying low and softly,—

“You had better mount and be ready to depart, my love. Dear lady,” addressing Lady Langdale, “we must effect our march with all speed. We have won the day against great odds, and I hope the enemy are so far dispersed that we shall meet no further interruption ; but it is well to leave nothing to chance, and if they should rally they might annoy us. I will have these poor fellows taken care of. My orders will soon be given. You and Lucy mount, and I will join you in a moment.”

“Oh ! give me some water ! In God’s name, give me some water !” cried a man near, who had evidently approached too near the gates of death ever to retrace his steps ; but it was a comfort for

his last hour ; and had he died even while the cup was at his lips, Lord Dartmoor could not have found it in his heart to ask Lucy to forbear. She hurried to him and gave him water ; and then to another, and another.

Bernard turned into the house.

"Here, old John Grey," he exclaimed, "you say I saved your life, after Long Marston Moor. If you hold your life worth anything, see to those poor wounded men without. Let them be well tended. It will be worth your while, whichever party wins. If the Parliament be lords of the day, so shall you curry favour with them. If King Charles is victorious, as well I hope he will be, I will exact a strict account of your obedience to my commands. Let the dead have Christian burial, whatever faction they be of. First, that poor fellow who lies on the bed there, mark his grave with a little cross, and the letters C. L. There is that man lying beneath the window. He, too, was shot in the head. There was a third upstairs. Send up quick and see if there be any life in him."

The old man ran up himself ; and while he was gone, the young Earl settled some accounts with the old woman, who had followed him into the house, pouring some money into her hand, and saying,—

"That is quite enough, good dame. Well, John ?

"Alack! He is quite dead and stiffening already, my lord," said the old man.

"Let him be buried with the rest," said Bernard. "Keep the cavaliers apart, though they have gone where factions are stilled, and all is peace. Bring out those carbines, and give them to Sergeant Loftus. They may be of service again. They have done well to-day."

When he left the inn and reappeared upon the green, he found Lucy and her mother remounted, and a party of horse drawn up a little in advance. Some spare horses, a number of pistols and carbines, and a good deal of ammunition were being brought up from the stables and the barn; and some five minutes elapsed in giving orders and making arrangements. By the end of that time, the larger party of the cavalry, who had been pursuing the fugitives to the left, began to appear, and with great rapidity and good discipline, the men formed upon the green. Lord Dartmoor, who had been talking on foot with young Henry Langdale, gave a few brief, clear orders to some of his officers; and then springing on his horse, advanced to the head of the line. He took off his hat and plume; and there was a dead silence; but his words, though loud and clear, were few.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I congratulate you! Long live King Charles! and God send him such soldiers as you."

There was a loud cheer from the men, and then Lord Dartmoor wheeled his horse to Lucy's side, but paused there for a moment without speaking. Then pointing with his sword, he exclaimed,—

“Now march!”

As well as if they had been disciplined for months, the cavalry began to defile along the road, first a couple of horsemen, then, with an interval of some fifty yards, two more, and then, at a similar distance, a considerable party of well-armed and well-mounted men. When they had passed, Bernard laid his hand lightly upon Lucy's rein, saying, in a gentle tone,—

“Now, my love. Lady Langdale, let us move on,” and taking the middle of the road, with Henry Langdale by the side of his mother, and the horsemen who had accompanied the two ladies riding on the right and left, Lord Dartmoor advanced at an easy pace towards the moor. A strong body followed, with a small party bringing up the rear, and covering some baggage and ammunition packed upon strong horses.

For a few minutes every one kept silence till the little column issued forth upon the open heath, and a wide view was opened on every side around. If there were enemies near, they must have been crouching among the low bushes, for no living object was to be seen, except what seemed to be a man on horseback galloping off at not less than

two miles distance. The sun shone brightly ; the wild birds skimmed and whistled over the heath, and all seemed peace and gladness. What a contrast to the scene just passed ! Lucy could not help thinking of him who rode so calmly and gently by her side ; and asking herself, can this be that same fiery horseman whom, not an hour ago, I saw cleaving his way like a thunderbolt through the thickest of the enemy ? Perhaps Bernard might himself judge that her he loved had seen that day a phase of his character which might pain—might frighten her. But there is no combination in that strange, mixed mass called human nature, which wins so greatly upon a woman's heart as energy and gentleness.







## CHAPTER XIX.

### SEARCHING FOR FRIENDS.

**T**ONG catalogues of names in the octosyllabic measure, by their harmony and the cadence they afford, very often, as we all must have felt in reading one of Sir Walter Scott's early poems, afford that pictorial element which is almost indispensable in all poetry. We see the ship of the Lord of the Isles pursue its voyage from spot to spot ; we see the horse of William of Deloraine bear him from place to place ; we see the hunt of James Fitzjames carry him deep into the highlands ; but the march of the verse is still required, and, alas, the poor prose writer has not that privilege. It would serve but little except to tire the reader, to tell how Lord Dartmoor and his little party passed on from the heath, which then lay between Upton and Tewksbury, first, to Ekington, and then to Childs Wickham. All

went quietly enough. The beautiful hills of Malvern were left behind, with many a fair sight and scene, which in happier moments might have wiled the travellers to linger, but which now only obtained a passing glance. The party moved on at a quick pace ; for they knew that the march must be long, and that much time had been consumed in the skirmish of the morning ; but, at the same time, they had to consider that the horses were already tired ; and, perhaps, Bernard Marsh might think that there were others in his company who could not so well bear a hasty ride as himself and his cavaliers. At Ekington all halted for a few minutes to refresh the beasts ; but it was a royalist part of the country ; and ready service waited on those who bore King Charles's colours. But something evidently disappointed the young Earl, and when, after apparently making many inquiries of the people standing about the inn door, he rejoined Lucy and her mother, his face, to say the least, was thoughtful, not to say sad, and his first words were rather forced than natural.

"What is the matter, Bernard ?" asked Lucy, with her usual frankness. "Your brow is cloudy, my love. Do you think we shall have a new attack ?"

"Oh, no, dearest," he answered, with a smile at apprehensions he could not share. "No fear of that now. We are in the most friendly part of

the land ; but, the fact is Henry and I have both been making many inquiries ; he about his father, I about the King ; and we can gain no tidings of either. The last news I had led me to believe that his majesty's forces must by this time be near Walshall or Birmingham. In that case the people must have heard of his advance, but they assure me they have no tidings, with such an air of simple honesty that I cannot but believe them. However, we can only pass on. At Childs Wickham probably I shall hear more, and there I can assuredly give you a quiet night. There is an old lady, a distant cousin of mine, a prudent and politic dame, who is right loyal at heart, but who, by a little temporising, has contrived to keep her estates from the greedy clutches of Parliament. I will send a messenger thence to Evesham. He will obtain certain news of your father, and perhaps bring me intelligence from the King."

"It is strange, Bernard, is it not?" said Henry Langdale, who was riding close behind, "that you have neither information nor commands from his majesty. What can be the cause of that?"

"There may be a thousand causes," answered Bernard Marsh, in an easy tone. "He is marching in great haste ; his messengers may have been cut off ; mine may never have reached him ; his hard-headed counsellors may think that my little force could be of small service ; or some kind

friend of mine in the camp may have asked, Who is the Earl of Dartmoor—what can the Earl of Dartmoor do? You know not courts and camps, my dear lad. Those who serve a King must serve him for his own sake, must learn to bear much, and be content with little; but I doubt not that some of the thousand accidents which are always playing on the world's great stage, have prevented intelligence from reaching me. Cheer up, dear Lucy. We shall be at Childs Wickham an hour after sunset, and you shall have some repose. But mind, whatever you see, take no notice. This good lady requires some compulsion to make her do what she has a mind to; but in her heart I am lord paramount at her house."

He spoke very cheerfully; but the eyes of love are keen, and Lucy was not persuaded to believe that her lover was aught but most uneasy. She would not, however, add even the weight of a word to the burden which pressed upon his mind already, though, could she have really seen what was passing in his heart—the certainty that a battle must be very near—the fear that he might not be present at it—the stern resolution to stake all upon success, and to cast away life itself as a mere bauble, if he could but win the day for his King—the poor girl herself might have been more uneasy.

In his calculation of the time necessary for the

march, Bernard Marsh was very nearly correct. No accident occurred to delay the progress of the party ; the sun set in tranquil splendour : a pale, yellow glory spread from the west over the whole sky, and it had hardly faded into a clear night, when on the right of the road appeared two large iron gates with a building behind each, in that perhaps unsymmetrical but still picturesque brick architecture which distinguished the reigns of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth. The first party of cavalry passed by the gates on the road and then wheeled ; and when Bernard came up, he advanced in person and shook the iron grating ; but no one answered, though the windows showed that the lodges were not without tenants.

"This is too bad," said he ; "the old lady carries her whims too far. Let some of the best mounted men follow me ;" and so saying he turned his horse upon the road, put him into a quick pace, and cleared, but just cleared, the low stone wall.

A number of others followed, scrambling over as best they could, for all the beasts were fatigued, and some of them refused the leap. Enough, however, followed their young commander to seize upon the different doors of the lodges, and Bernard Marsh knocked hard at that on the right hand, somewhat doubting, it is true, whether he might not find the place in possession of some Parliamentary force, although, from what he knew

of the country, he judged such a result not very likely.

The door was opened slowly by an old man with a candle in his hand, who stared stupidly at the party of armed horsemen, saying, in the olden parlance,—

“Give you good den, gentles. I should say, give you good night. What seek you here? We are all quiet, God-fearing people, under protection, and are exempt from billet and subsistence, except a bowl of barley meal, or half a gallon of pease for each man, and wheaten bread for those holding commissions—and beer—beer of course; and good beer it is too.”

“As you know by the frequent taste thereof,” said the young Earl. “Why, how now, old Jerome, do you not know me? Methinks the very sound of my voice would have wakened you up with the memory of other years. Open those gates, old man—nay, no words, open the gates! If not, a charge of powder will soon leave no lock at all.”

“But, my lord—my good lord,” said the old man, who seemed marvellously soon to recover his recollection, “my Lady Dame Janet ordered me to open to no one.”

“You cannot resist superior force, Jerome,” said the Earl. “I would use no hard measures with an old friend; but if you force me to blow the lock

off, the gates must stand open all night. Only tell me one thing, and tell me truly, for this hesitation makes me suspicious. Are there any roundhead troops in the house?"

"God forbid!" said the old man, warmly. "No, no, my lady would not let any of such sort within her doors if she could help it—only—only——"

"Only what?" asked the Earl, almost sternly.

"Only, my lord, because there are some expected very shortly," said the old man, in a tone of so much hesitation that the doubts of Lord Dartmoor were rather confirmed than removed by his words.

The gates were, however, opened with some slowness, giving the whole party room to pass in. The Earl ordered them at once to be shut and the keys brought to him; and bidding the old man go in and go to sleep, he himself led the way towards the house.

The road passed down a long avenue of fine elms, at that time of year in complete leaf, while the moon, just rising, glanced across the path, and covered the brown slopes of grass and fern in the park with gleams of silvery light.

All was still and quiet around; nothing animate was to be seen, except when a hare, startled by the horses' feet, scampered away, paused, lifted its tall ears, and then dashed off again.

At length, however, the terrace before the house

was reached ; and ere the party began to ascend the rise leading up to the front door, Bernard, in a quiet tone, ordered a halt, and bidding some six or seven picked men to dismount, led the way on foot, and rang the great bell at the door. It was an old Elizabethan building of considerable extent, with numerous small windows stretching along the front ; and the young Earl's eye ran along the façade, where several, but not many lamps or candles were burning. All had an appearance of peaceful quiet, and no light but one moved along the front ; but there was a keen eye watching, and every motion of that light was remarked. There was time for observation ; for the door was not opened very rapidly ; and before any ingress was granted a small window was raised, and a voice inquired,—

“ Who is there at this hour of the night ? ”

“ It is I, the Earl of Dartmoor,” replied the young nobleman. “ William Hardcastle, open and let me in.”

“ Good lack. my lord, I must ask my lady,” said the old servant ; “ she is very positive just now to receive no one of either party. She says her brain is turned with these disputes, and she knows not which is right and which is wrong.”

“ I do,” said the Earl ; “ so be quick ; for I am coming in, and I do not bide standing before the door.”



"Anon, my lord, anon," said the old man ; and he retired from the window.

For perhaps the space of a minute Bernard Marsh stood as if in expectatiou ; but then taking a step or two along the terrace, to the window at the side, from which the man had spoken, he laid his hand upon the sill, and vaulted in. In another moment, the door was unlocked and the bolts drawn back ; and exclaiming aloud, with a laugh, " Ville prise !" Lord Dartmoor left his men to guard the possession they had obtained, and retired to lift Lucy and Lady Langdale from their horses.

"Follow, Henry," he said ; " I will see to the accommodation of the men in a moment. Let that good girl come in, too ; her ladies will want her."

Thus saying, he led the way into the house, and found in the hall some five or six old serving men, known in those days by the name of blue-bottles, probably from some resemblance between their ale-tinctured noses and the proboscis of the fly so called. The armed men had not moved, but one of them, Sergeant Loftus, was winking his eye to an old gentleman whom he seemed to know ; and if one might judge from the row of faces, the good servitors of the house were not at all displeased at the sight of the young lord. They were all smiles, though none of them spoke ; and giving his arm to Lady Langdale, Bernard led her forward towards the end of the corridor, where he threw open a door,

giving entrance to a hall of large dimensions, but furnished in what was then considered, modern taste. At the opposite end of the room, near the large fire place, stood an old lady, as straight and stiff as one of the tall-backed chairs. There was a good deal of irritation in her countenance, and the large fan in her hand was in a continual state of agitation, as she listened to something old Hardcastle was saying to her.

"Bernard, I must say I am surprised," she said, in a sharp tone, advancing towards him ; but he suffered her not to conclude the sentence.

"I know you are, dear lady," he said, "the whole house is surprised. It is mine by a *coup de main* ; and from this moment I take possession of it in the name of his Majesty King Charles the Second. You may judge I am not going to use my victory harshly ; but I have here one hundred and fifty horses, and a hundred and thirty-three men, who must all be provided for. Moreover, let me introduce you to Lady Langdale, Countess of Mirepoix, and to Mademoiselle Lucy Langdale, who has escaped by a miracle, as yet, from being Countess of Dartmoor. They will expect hospitable entertainment, and comfortable rooms for the night, which I am sorry to exact ; but as I hear you have turned Parliamentary, I am bound to provide for the King's friends."

"Bernard, Bernard !" said the old lady, "your

jokes are somewhat rude. But how shall I account to the powers that be for harbouring you here?"

"I am the powers that be," answered the Earl; "if any one else asks any questions, reply *Force Majeur*! And tell them that if you had not given what I demanded, I would have taken it, which you may say with a good conscience, and in all sincerity."

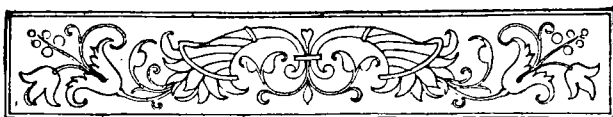
"You hear, Hardcastle," said the old lady; "I yield to compulsion—to compulsion in my own house. My lord, what may be your high commands? Oh, I remember. A hundred and fifty men, and the same number of horses. Tell all the grooms in the parish to take care of his lordship's men and horses; but, remember, it is all upon compulsion. There be doubtless some gentlemen and officers amongst them. Let them be civilly entreated in the hall upon compulsion. But here is another task, my lord, and a more pleasant one," she continued, with much old-fashioned grace, advancing to Lady Langdale and Lucy. "Ladies, excuse me for keeping you standing. Pray be seated. I was obliged to notice first the commands of this ill-mannered boy, lest he should spoil the house. Be seated, pray. All shall be ready in a minute for your due entertainment."

But Lady Langdale remained standing, and answered, with an air of much dignity,—

"I thank you, madam ; but excuse my saying I would rather sleep in yonder park, than take advantage of unwilling hospitality, rendered on compulsion."

The old lady laughed good-humouredly, saying, "Nonsense, nonsense, my dear girl. Do not spoil it all now. The matter is very well as it is. Sleep in the park, God wot ! Very fit, I think, for you and this pretty little thing. What, with a hundred and fifty rake-helly cavaliers to keep you company ! Sit, sit. They will serve supper for us in a minute. Bernard, you go away, and order your men. See that they behave themselves ; they can have the baron of beef, and plenty of pork-chops, with as much strong beer as will leave them sober. Now, my dear children, let us have a quiet, pleasant evening—upon compulsion."





## CHAPTER XX.

### COMPULSORY HOSPITALITY.

**I**N this strange life, where every sort of pleasure has its zest from pain, either preceding or concomitant—where love has its doubts and fears for the present, and fruition its apprehensions for the future, and success too often its regrets for the past—the sudden change from eager activity to tranquil calm, seems in itself so great a happiness that the spirit springs up with a bound, and one is almost tempted to throw away the peaceful blessing, and to compensate—if such compensation were possible—the pains, anxieties, and cares just gone, by tasting the exuberant cup of joy.

The past day had been to Lucy Langdale and her mother a time of danger and trouble and hourly trepidation ; and now that they sat quietly in that old saloon, the contrast was strange and almost overpowering. Everything added to it also.

When her first caprice or policy—be it which it would—had passed away, their hostess became really kind ; and, when Bernard Marsh returned, he seemed to have washed away from his mind all traces of thought and care when he had wiped out the stains of battle from his brow and hands. He was, perhaps, more gay and thoughtless than Lucy had ever seen him, and she herself felt that eagerness to grasp the fleeting moment of tranquillity which is too soon and too often felt in every troublous life.

“Ring that little bell at the door, Bernard,” said the old lady ; “they are making us wait wondrous long for our supper.”

“Oh,” answered the cavalier, “the serving folks have to sup so many unexpected guests to-night, we must have patience.”

But he rang the silver bell, notwithstanding ; and in a few minutes after, it was announced that the meal was served in a neighbouring chamber. Thither, with some ceremony, the lady of the mansion led the way. Lady Langdale and Lucy followed ; but Bernard Marsh lingered for a few moments, somewhat perhaps to Lucy’s surprise. He was in the room, however, before any one was seated, and was not less gay and cheerful than before. He seemed to give himself up to that tranquillity and repose of mind which had for many days been interrupted by continual exertion

or active strife. Misfortunes, sorrows and anxieties, cares and apprehensions, seemed forgotten, and that softer and gentler character which Sir Edward Langdale had, at one time, mistaken for effeminacy, reappeared in the tranquil leisure of that evening. He sang at the old lady's request, he examined the fine pictures with which she had stored the dining-room since he was last there ; and he descanted, if not with the skill of an artist, at least with the knowledge of a connoisseur, upon the merits of the various styles and various pictures there displayed.

“Of all the painters of portraits that I know,” said Lord Dartmoor, “that Sir Anthony Vandyke has, to my mind, the greatest power. When I was in Italy, I saw several by the most renowned artists in the world—the admirable Leonardo—the glorious Titian ; and even by him who has been called, not inaptly, the divine ; but when I look at a picture such as that”—and he pointed to one hung against the opposite wall—“I feel there is a grace in it—a life-like, almost living charm about it, that sets the man before you as he moved, and spoke, and acted. There is not, perhaps, the richness of Titian's colouring ; there is not the inspiration of Raphael's design ; there may not even be the imaginative power of Leonardo ; but there is displayed that faculty which allies the great painter to the epic poet, and enables him to

seize and make his own the very inner heart of the character he represents."

He paused for a moment or two, and then added, half gaily, half sadly, twisting his fingers in the long wavy hair of his promised bride,—

"Dear Lucy, it is one of my hopeful dreams to think some day I shall have your portrait painted by such a hand as that."

"God grant it, Bernard," said Lady Langdale, though Lucy only answered by a faint smile; "how often it would have been a comfort to me beyond words, to have had such a picture of my dear husband—when he has been leaving me for scenes of strife and danger—when I knew not how soon, if ever, I should see him again."

"What a power has a great painter!" continued Bernard. "It is not alone for the present day he paints; but centuries hence men shall gaze upon that face and figure, and trace therein the feelings and the thoughts that are now working perhaps the weal or woe of thousands of our fellow-men. Then comes in history, to show what was the meaning of the lines upon the countenance, what passions or what sufferings impressed them there; and the pen shall be the comment on the pencil."

While he spoke, his hand withdrew from Lucy's hair, pressed gently upon hers, and hers were clasped as tenderly on his, while the old lady sat



looking on with a smile that had something of good-humoured malice in it.

"What, billing and cooing, my little dove?" she said at length. "You little think what a hawk you have got for a mate."

"A falcon, but no hawk," answered Lucy, mildly; "would I had his picture, too, dear lady; there would be no bad lines there."

"He is a good-looking youth enough," answered the old woman, "he was so from a boy, and sometimes he would look as gentle as an angel; but you should see him when his blood is up, and all the fierce fire of his race comes out! how it flashes in his eye, how it swells out his nostrils!"

"I have seen that noble fire this very day," answered Lucy, a little vexed; "but I know you are only jesting."

"This very day!" cried the other; "this very day! Have you had to fight for it, then, Bernard?"

"Yes, madam," answered Lady Langdale, "and nobly did he fight for his King, his country, and his bride. Attacked by three times his own number, he has left few to tell the tale of his victory and their defeat."

"Hush, hush!" cried Bernard Marsh, with a laugh; "dear Lady Langdale, you forget we are speaking of her friends the roundheads. Make yourself easy, my kind old friend. I do not believe

there is a rebel left between this and Banbury, that would not run at the first sight of a love-lock ; and, moreover, if hereafter they should get the upper hand of us, and make strict inquiry how you came to shelter prelatists and malignants, especially that proclaimed traitor, Bernard, calling himself Earl of Dartmoor, you can but say it was upon compulsion ; and there is old Hardcastle, who will swear to it."

"Fie, Bernard ! you are a silly boy," answered the old lady ; "when you were here last, you were grave enough, and I had hopes of you. Natural you should be grave, for they had got King Charles and——"

"Hush !" said Bernard Marsh, solemnly, "he is a saint in heaven ; and the time will come, I hope, and some here may live to see, when this land shall mourn for what it did unto the Royal martyr."

"Well, God grant us peace !" said the old lady. "At seventy years of age one gets weary of continual strife ; and I have seen too much of it ; but we forget our guests. They are doubtless tired, and will find a pillow pleasant. But I must hear more of this battle, or whatever it was. They will tell me as they disrobe ; for I will not trust thee, Bernard. Thou wilt boast of all manner of deeds ; and yet I fancy I shall find one who will boast for thee. Come, dove, I will see you and your mother to your chamber, and will promise to love you very

much, if you will engage not to marry that young man. Oh, he is a terrible malignant, men tell me, and you see how he can treat his own near relations."

With these words she led the way from the room into the neighbouring hall where they had first found her ; but at the door she stopped short ; for she found two armed men pacing up and down in the guise of sentinels.

"Why, who are these?" she exclaimed in a tone of indignation and vexation, turning towards Bernard, who followed.

"Only my sentries, dear lady," he answered ; "you forget that you are in contumacy to my king, King Charles. This house is in my possession in his name. I occupy this lower floor, and my posts are placed wherever I lodge. It is a rule which has no exception."

"Well, sir, well," said the old lady, turning away with a look of much indignation ; but at the door she stopped, saying, in a smoother tone, "Hardcastle will show you to your room, sir. I suppose I am not expected to be groom of the chamber to gentlemen, my lord."

"I am always my own," replied Lord Dartmoor with a bow, and calmly saw her depart.

When she was gone, Bernard paused for a moment or two in thought. Then raising his voice he said,—

“Pierrot Lagrange, place yourself at that door ; Lancey at that. Wait for orders, and obey them promptly.” He then stopped till he saw the two men at their posts, standing in the midst of the hall, and gazing up at a large picture of a gentleman on horseback, with a leading staff in his hand. Then advancing he pushed a chair under the picture, and ran his fingers along the large frame. At one point he paused, and seemed to press hard, when suddenly the whole picture, frame and all, moved back ; and Bernard said, in a loud and clear voice, but with perfect calmness, “Come down !”





## CHAPTER XXI.

### A SPEAKING PORTRAIT.

“**C**OME down, sir,” repeated Lord Dartmoor, in a tone firm enough; but not menacing. “I know every recess of this house and all its secret places as well as you do, at least. Your person is safe, if your hands have not been dipped in the blood of the martyr. If they have, other voices must judge you—not mine.”

“My hands have been dipped in no blood but mine own,” replied a deep voice, from within the opening which the removal of the picture exposed to view; and the next moment there appeared, like a portrait in a frame, a tall, somewhat stout man in a costume very different, perhaps, from that which any one there present expected to see. It was that of a monk, with the dim garments floating round him, and his hand resting on a rosary of black beads hanging from his girdle. His face, as

far as the general features went, was quite calm, though stern and grave, but his dark eye was wandering and uncertain—not flashing or excited, but with the small, contracted pupil and constant movement which one often sees in some kinds of insanity. Yet his manner was quite tranquil, as if every thought, gesture, and expression were under full command. He looked first at Lord Dartmoor, and then at each of the sentinels; then at Lord Dartmoor again, and then at the two men; but there was nothing of fear or trepidation in the glance he gave either. It was merely an unquiet, restless motion of the eye, which seemed habitual.

It was all very rapid, and at length he spoke.

“What want you with me?” he said, in the same deep, gloomy tones. “If you suppose I am hiding here for my own security, you are mistaken. I only condescended to enter this place to shield a lady from persecutions. For my own life I ask nothing. Who takes the burden off my shoulders puts it on his own. I am weary of it, and would fain put it down; but, whosoever you are, you will comprehend—at least I judge so, from the words I have heard—that you are neither serving the cause you advocate nor the religion you profess, in forcing me to disclose myself thus prematurely.”

His language and manner were good; though there was a strong foreign accent upon his tongue which seemed to show that he was not a native of

the British Isles ; but upon the Earl of Dartmoor his words seemed to produce an embarrassing effect, for he was a moment without reply. It must be remembered that, in the struggles of what is called the "Great Rebellion," the imprudence of the King's friends—or, at least, of those who wished him well—proved more disastrous to his cause than the strength and vigour of his enemies ; that the strong and determined adherence of his partisans to the side of the Church of England brought upon them the accusation of a leaning towards the ancient faith of Rome, and that those who were merely attached to the union of Church and State—as the first, purest, and most certain safeguard against submission to any foreign jurisdiction over the Church—were charged with being desirous in reality of subjecting the Anglican Episcopacy to a foreign influence.

To find, then, in the house of his near relation, a monk belonging to a papistical order, was not a little embarrassing to Lord Dartmoor, not from any of the prejudices or fanaticism which divided the parties that then ruled England, but from the political results which were likely to ensue whichever party gained the temporary ascendancy in the strife then immediately going on. How to shape his own conduct, too, was a question of no slight difficulty ; for to draw the least suspicion of favouring the abhorred religion upon the Royal

cause, was at once to alienate one of the most powerful fragments which had just been brought to reunite themselves in support of the monarchy. To the Presbyterians of the Scottish army, then in the field for King Charles, the Roman Catholic faith was even a greater abomination than to the Independents of the Parliamentary army, who were very willing to admit the services of any one, be his religion what it would, who would forward the predominance of the anarchical objects they had in view. We all know what it is to give occasion for a cry against a man, or against a body, and this it is which has given the great power to political names.

Nor was the Earl unaware of the danger of any one of his house seeming even to lean towards that church against which the cry of late years had been so fierce and strong. The words of the monk, too, were true for the most part. He felt that certainly he had not served the royal cause, in forcing him to discover himself, and that it was not improbable that a man so bold as to tread the soil of England in that habit, would only submit to concealment for the sake of those to whom he was much beholden.

All these and many other considerations crossed his mind in that brief interval of thought, but then he answered,

“Will you descend? you are quite safe; but



it is necessary I should speak a few words with you."

"Safety?" said the monk, with a scoff, "what care I for safety? If I wanted safety, why did I come here? Nor do I see of what use are words between us. You have done your worst, young man, in discovering me to those two soldiers;" and as he spoke, he came down with a firm tread upon the table, and then upon the floor.

"You are mistaken," replied Lord Dartmoor; "these two men are faithful and subordinate, and will, I know, obey my orders to the letter."

"Ay!" answered the other, "like all the rest—obey man, and forget God; I was once such myself—proud vain, wilful, till the curse of Cain fell upon me; and I raised my hand against a brother's life. But glory be to Him on high, who sent the remorse and the punishment betimes, who let not the crime be fully consummated, yet kept me in ignorance of His great grace till that grace had worked the subjugation of my heart! Why, I saw him fall!" he continued, grasping Lord Dartmoor's arm, while his eyes rolled almost maniacally, "I saw his blood flow like water on the ground. I passed through years of penance and remorse—long, long years; and then by the mercy of the Holy Virgin, I learned that the crime had not been complete; and I learned still more—much more; that the sin I had committed was nothing

to the hardness of heart, and vainglory, and deceit and worldly lusts which had produced the sin; that far from returning to the same frame of mind, and seeking the same objects, and pursuing the same paths, I must mourn and do penance for the corruption that was in me, and receive the crime I was permitted to attempt, as a warning from on high, and the blessed tidings that it had failed as an exhortation from the Queen of Heaven to dedicate every earthly thought to her. But what signifies my talking so to you? You cannot understand me."

"Not fully," replied Lord Dartmoor, "but I may comprehend, in part. I have lived long among persons of your religious persuasion, and can perceive that you had committed a great crime, and have done ample penance for it. Let it then be forgotten. The crime, it seems, was not really committed, and your long repentance must have blotted out the offence."

"No, no!" cried the monk, "you mistake, young man—you mistake the principles and force of my faith—the true faith, the ancient faith, the faith of saints, and martyrs, and apostles. I mistook once, and I thought that by doing penance for the act, I could atone for its motives; but not so, young man, not so. I have learned to do penance for the feelings and the desires and the pride that instigated it. You have heard of Cain. Even your heresy tells you of his

crime and its consequences ; but think—only think—of what must have been his feelings, when he saw before him his brother lie dead upon the grass, the first sight of death which had darkened the sunshiny universe. Was it the knowledge alone that he was a murderer—that that awful act was his ? Oh, no ! There was much more. Up before his eye rose, at that moment, the prophetic foresight of all to which that act was to give rise ; and more, far more ; the cloud was removed from his sight, and he saw how, step by step, desire had grown into envy, and envy into hatred, and both into contempt of God and of His word ; and then came upon him the glory of the Almighty, and was to him, not a blessing, but a curse. I have felt it all, young man ; but no one who has not felt it can know it.”

He spoke in the same earnest manner, and with the same sort of wild vehemence which had more or less characterized all he had hitherto said ; but the language he used was English, and though there was that strong foreign accent, the words were good and well chosen, as if the tongue was or had been familiar to him.

Bernard Marsh was—unusual thing for him—somewhat puzzled how to act.

“You know, I presume,” he said, “that your presence in this country is very dangerous to yourself, especially at this time,”

"What care I for danger?" replied the man; "men fear who have some blessings to live for. I have none. The momentary pain, the long repose of death, the ending of all fear, and sorrow, and regret, the committal of one's self solely to the unfailing mercy of the Most High, what is there to fear in that? But yet you are right in one sense. I have duties to perform before I die, or the voluntary atonement is not made. When that is accomplished, I am ready to depart."

"Well, then," replied the Earl, "let us speak of what is best for your safety till the end is gained. I will not attempt to hide from you, that had I known whom I should find behind that frame, it should have remained still and unmoved by me; but my good cousin here is a strange and somewhat changeable person; and I thought, perchance, to find one of those who had dipped their hands in the blood of my murdered master. I know not what may be her religion now. She was once a friend and follower of the martyred Laud. She may now, for aught I know, be a frequenter of the tabernacle or meeting-house."

"She, she!" cried the monk, with a loud laugh, "she is as pure a Catholic Christian as I am. Why else am I here?"

"Why you are here, I know not," answered Lord Dartmoor.

"Then I will tell you," said the other, interrupt-

ing his unfinished sentence, "I am here, first, to perform my own high duty, and next to visit, and strengthen, and console the poor and scattered remnant of true believers on this heretical and blood-stained soil, to guide the doves among the serpents, and show them how they may best escape the snares of the enemy. Weak women—and your cousin is weak, though wise—are prone to yield to force and fear. Their only refuge is in that holy subtlety which is authorized by the very text of Scripture. They may still be as innocent as doves, although they be as wise as serpents."

"A quotation perhaps not rightly read," said the Earl; "and so my good cousin Janet is a good Romanist? God grant her comfort in her faith; and far be it from me to shake it. But tell me—have you found your way in this garb through a country where so many really abhor the doctrines of your Church, and where so many more affect to do so, either from fear or policy—have you ventured this and escaped?"

"From one side of the country to the other, well nigh," replied the monk, "have I gone, without interruption. Men have looked askance at me, perhaps; but I heed not men's looks. Men have growled something in their throats; but I can close my ears to foolish sounds. I have begged a cup of water and a piece of bread, as I passed; but nothing more; and some have called me mad;

but all have given the little that I asked, while a few have added the *benedicite*. Here only did I consent to conceal myself; for the weak old woman feared that my presence in her house might bring evil upon her."

"She was wise, not weak," replied Lord Dartmoor; "but how found you your way hither? Your friends are scattered and spread wide; and most are, like good Lady Janet, afraid to confess their faith, in the bitter persecution that now reigns. Had you any guide or directions?"

"Guide I had none," answered the other, "but my directions were ample. Look here!" and he drew forth an old and worn catalogue of names, written closely on several sheets of paper; "I have visited every one but sixty on all this list," he continued, "and the rest shall be visited too, before all is over."

He held out the papers as he spoke; and the young Earl took and read them hastily.

"Enough, and more than enough," said Lord Dartmoor, with a sigh, "to have placed their sovereign back upon his ancient throne, if they had but used all the power which wealth and influence afford them. This shows indeed, that in popular commotions, fear and hesitation are more strong than armies against those who have only the support of a good cause."

"Take care, my lord, take care!" cried Sergeant

Loftus, suddenly throwing himself between his young leader and the monk, who by a quick movement had placed his hand beneath his robe.

But the friar looked at him with a contemptuous smile, saying,—

“Fool! see what is the dull thickness of thy prejudice. It is but an image of the Saviour, who died for thee and me, the constant memory of whose suffering is needful to enable us to bear our own;” and he drew forth a small ebony cross, with an ivory figure of Christ stretched in His agony upon it.

He kissed the crucifix with reverence, and then put it in his bosom again; but Bernard Marsh turned to the soldier, saying,—

“There is no fear, my good friend. Now leave me and this man; and take your place on the other side of the door. Pierrot, retire into the other room, and wait till I call you.”

The men obeyed, though, it must be admitted, with some reluctance and suspicion, for Loftus had all the prejudices of the English soldier, and hated and doubted every papist, he knew not and cared not why; and Pierrot had too many memories of the siege of Rochelle about him to have a bias as strong, though somewhat more reasonable, in the same direction.

When they were gone, the young Earl took the monk's hand in a kindly manner, saying,—

"Be seated, my good friend. Though I be what you would call an heretic, and by no means a latitudinarian, I reverence all sincere convictions, though different from my own. You are, I am sure, sincere; and I am as willing as my good cousin to do all I can for you."

"I want nothing from any one," replied the monk, casting himself down into a chair; "of you, especially, I ask nothing but to-morrow to let me go quietly on my way, fulfil my mission, and then meet any fate which may be in store for me."

"Hear me to an end," answered Lord Dartmoor, calmly but gravely; "you do not yet understand your own position or mine. Do you know that hostile armies are gathering round this very spot?"

"I have heard something of the kind," answered the other; "but what care I for armies?"

"Do you know that the soldiers of either army would think they did good service in shedding your blood?" continued Bernard Marsh. "You say you have an object to accomplish, a mission to fulfil. What becomes of either, if by your own imprudence you lose your life before either is attained?"

The monk looked gloomily on the ground, but answered nothing, and the Earl went on,—

"I wish to give you advice, but it must be



followed implicitly to be of any service. You cannot leave this house upon your journey to-morrow, whatever be its end and object. You are here in security. Elsewhere you meet death ; I myself, leaving all those most dear to me, must go forward, whatever be the result."

"Cannot I go with you?" exclaimed the monk, abruptly.

"No," said the Earl, in a decided tone ; "I cannot bring upon the King's cause the accusation of favouring a religion which is viewed with hatred, not only by those opposed to him, but by those especially who are now his strongest and best supporters. You must remain here till the fate of the next battle is decided. How it may end, who on this earth can say ? But it is wise to provide against all contingencies, though we fear none. It may be that this fortunate General—this Cromwell—this King-slayer——"

"God's curse upon him!" said the monk.

"Who is now rapidly following my Royal master," continued Bernard, without noticing his words, "may once more, by his high qualities, which are many, or by our faults, which are not few, command success. I may fall upon the field, be taken prisoner, be so wounded as to be incapable of giving help or counsel. In that case, if you will throw off these garments, assume the dress of an English layman, and act as guide to the

ladies I have here, you may do good service to the most faithful servants of King Charles, pursue your journey, and accomplish your own purposes, whatever they may be. You must well know the face of this country of England after your long wanderings?"

"Every inch of it," replied the other, bending his head; "but the garb, how can I cast that off? Even when I was ordained a priest, I retained the frock, which in penitence of heart I had assumed."

"Your own faith, as well as your own security, justify such an act in such circumstances," said the Earl; "would that both were not often held to justify much more! Unless you do this you can be of no service to me or to yourself. But before I proceed I must have your promise."

The monk waved his hand, and bent his eyes upon the ground, remaining several moments in profound meditation. Heaven knows what thoughts occupied his mind, what deep subtleties which in his days and in his Church so often engaged the thoughts and influenced the actions of men; but in the end he raised his head suddenly, and said,—

"I will do it. What next, young man? Where shall I get those garments? I have none but these."

"They shall be provided for you," replied Lord Dartmoor. "There must be many a man in my

party whose suit will fit you, if some of mine will not. Now mark me : you must return to your place of concealment. A bed shall be brought there, for from what I saw through the window, they had no time to place one——”

“I sleep in no bed,” rejoined the monk.

“Well, then,” said the Earl, “three men shall be left behind with you. Two of them speak French, which, doubtless, you understand, and one is an Englishman, who may be of use in time of need. As soon as I know what turn affairs have taken, if I come not myself some messenger shall reach you. Should it be needful to fly, the men and the ladies will be collected immediately at a small postern door at the back of this building, with a horse for yourself—you can ride, I suppose?”

The monk smiled with a contemptuous look ; but merely replied,—

“Go on ! How shall I find my way to this postern door ? where is it ?”

“It leads to the most wooded part of the park,” said Lord Dartmoor ; “but you have no occasion to seek it through the open ground. There is a way through the house. Just facing the back of this picture there is a mirror. You can draw it back ; and though the glass itself is but small, a large part of the wainscot will follow it. It leads to a narrow passage without light, but feeling by

the wall, it will bring you straight to the door I have mentioned. A spring-lock will give you exit. Close all behind you, and leave as little trace as possible of your having been here at all. No use of implicating this good lady."

"You are thoughtful!" said the monk, "but, tell me, who are those ladies whom I am to guide?"

Lord Dartmoor thought for a moment, and then replied,—

"The eldest you may call Countess de Mirepoix, the younger is her daughter."

"And whither am I to lead them?" was the next question. "I am not accustomed to travel with women, and love not the task. The sooner it is over the better."

"Assuredly," answered the Earl, somewhat dryly; "in case of any mishap which may perhaps befall the Royal arms, it were safer for all to take refuge in Holland; and passage will be more easily obtained from the eastern than from the western side of the island. Pass straight across the country to Huntingdonshire, tending towards St. Neots. There you can leave the ladies and their servants, and make your way straight to the Wash, in the neighbourhood of Lynn. There you will find shipping easily and safely, too, if you be prudent."

"But where are the women to be left?" asked

the monk. "I would see them beyond danger, were it possible."

"Every place is dangerous in these times," said the Earl, with a very grave face: "but yet, perhaps, there is one place where they may find some security. There is a house called Buckley, not far from St. Neots, which at one time was sequestered by the Parliament. But by some caprice, I learn, or perhaps by some more generous motive, the sequestration has been raised, the sequestrator removed, and a few old servants allowed to return and abide there. But you look strangely, my good friend. Do you know the place?"

"But slightly," said the monk, with his eyes wandering over the ground. "I was there many years ago for a short time; but I can find it. Go on."

"Leave the ladies there, then, till they hear more, and then make the best of your way to Lynn. Is there anything I can do for you? You have had food, of course."

The man gave a cynical smile, and answered,—

"The presence of your two men was security enough that I should have none. Bread and water is all that I take; but that, I fear, must be had; for I am quite faint. I would gladly have a lamp, too, and some means of trimming it."

"You shall have all you desire," replied the Earl, "and to-morrow people shall be sent to attend further to your wants."

The monk bowed his head not ungracefully; and the young nobleman calling in Pierrot, gave him the necessary orders. While the good man was gone, the monk, as if to fill up the time, said, in a low tone, but fixing his eyes upon the Earl's face,—

“I would fain know your name, my son.”

“Men call me the Earl of Dartmoor,” said the other; “but it matters little what they call that which to-morrow may be a heap of dust. My plain name is Bernard Marsh.”

“Earl of Dartmoor! Bernard Marsh!” murmured the monk; “and Countess of Mirepoix, too!” and as soon as Pierrot had brought what he desired, he stepped upon the chair, entered the little secret chamber, and drew the picture over the aperture.

Bernard Marsh then called the men to him, gave them strong injunctions to secresy and silence, and adding, “Send old Hardcastle to me,” sat down and covered his eyes with his hands.





## CHAPTER XXII

### THE BILLET.



DAY passed over in as much external quiet as can be known to hearts much moved internally. Lady Langdale and Lucy had ample opportunity of conversation with Bernard Marsh during the morning, and received full directions from him as to their future course. All was delivered in a calm and quiet tone, with as few allusions as possible to any danger or difficulty ; but in what he had to say there was many a point to be touched upon which was a key to some deeper feeling in the breasts of all three, and produced no less effect because it was touched lightly. The tones of the Eolian harp are not less melancholy because they are vague.

Thus, when he told them what to do in case *any reverse attended the Royal arms*, imagination of course ran forward to all that might attend such

reverse at the time, and in the consequences. Lucy, though very gentle, was firm, however; and though she could not restrain fancy from gazing upon some pictures as dark and terrible as the sternest reality could display, she would not let apprehension master her; nor would she by one word or one tear chill the ardour of him whose cause she believed to be right.

Lady Langdale, too, acted her part well, and supported rather than depressed her child, though her heart might well sink within her when she thought that, in the near approaching strife, the liberty and life of a husband and a son, and one whom she hardly looked upon as less than a child of her own, were to be risked upon the uncertain issue of battle. None of the three could be cheerful; but none suffered great emotion to appear, whatever they might feel; and the only persons who boldly approached the painful subjects of which all were thinking were good Lady Janet, who, lightly, and, as Lucy thought, unfeelingly, spoke with a sour jest of her good cousin's speedy departure, and young Henry Langdale, who, though he came down to breakfast stiff and bruised, with his fall of the day before, was all eager and burning to take part in a more extensive and decisive action.

Neither the Earl nor Lady Janet referred even remotely to the monk or his concealment; but



going into the smaller room, where they had supped on the preceding night, the old lady led the way by another passage ; and the morning meal passed partly in silence, partly in low and grave conversation.

“ You have seen that your men and officers are taken care of, Bernard,” said the old lady, at length, in a gentler and more earnest tone than she had hitherto used. “ They will want all the strength and refreshment they can have. You have got possession of the house, and they can have all they want—upon compulsion, you know, upon compulsion.”

“ You are mistaken, I think, my good cousin,” replied Lord Dartmoor, gravely ; for even Lady Janet’s persistence in her little art could not wring a smile from him just then ; “ I do not believe they will have to draw a blade so soon. I am only going to seek tidings of Sir Edward Langdale and the King ; for I have had no tidings of his majesty for several days. I shall leave a small garrison with you, however ; for you are so notorious a rebel, good cousin, I cannot trust you without a *force majeure* to control you. Pierrot, Lady Langdale,” he continued, “ with young Grey, the rest of your servants, and some chosen men of my party, will remain behind to protect and guide you should need be ; and I trust that before to-morrow I shall be able to send you good news of your husband.

He cannot be far off. Good lady, I wish to speak with you," and rising from the table he beckoned Lady Janet into the recess of an oriel window.

There he talked to her for a few minutes in a low tone; and what he said seemed certainly to affect her a good deal, for the old lady wiped her eyes, and when he turned away pressed his hand, saying,—

"Assuredly, Bernard, as if she were my child. You are a good, brave boy, but rather rough with the old women, whatever you may be with young ones."

Just at that moment a soldier fully armed entered the room unceremoniously, and said a word or two to the young leader, who, advancing to the breakfast-table, took Lucy's hand and pointed from a window which looked out upon the park.

There, upon the little green esplanade, mounted and in marching order, appeared the small body of cavalier horse, with six or seven men on foot, some holding saddled horses, some waiting apparently for commands.

"God bless you, my sweet Lucy!" said Bernard, and in spite of the eyes that were upon them, he pressed her for a moment to his heart, and placed a kiss upon her beautiful lips. Then turning to Lady Langdale, he took her hand affectionately, and hurried from the room.

Lucy continued to look forth from the window for a moment, and saw Bernard mount ; but then darted forth, and the next instant was seen standing by his horse's side, speaking to him eagerly

Only a word or two of what they said reached the ears of those within the chamber, although the window was open.

"I will," answered Bernard Marsh ; "I will, if it is possible."

Lucy added something more, and he replied,—

"I must not say nay ; but oh, my dear girl, preserve yourself for all those who are dear to you. Now run back. We shall meet again, I know, I feel it, I hope——"

The last word was somewhat faint ; but Lucy turned and went back into the house. Her mother opened her arms to her as she entered the room where they had breakfasted, and Lucy cast herself upon her bosom and wept. All the long-suppressed emotion broke forth then, when the moment for concealing it was over ; and she sobbed so bitterly that even old Lady Janet was moved, and advancing to Lady Langdale's side, said,—

"Take her to her room, poor child, and let her cry. It will do her good. Don't be too much alarmed, little pet. Many a man comes safe out of battle, whether it be won or lost. I have seen many of them, alack ! and it is never so bad as we think beforehand."

Lady Langdale followed the advice, which was good ; but it was nearly two o'clock before Lucy appeared again, and then her eyes were still red with weeping ; but the old lady, who had been watching for them, persuaded her to go out into the park.

"It is a fine day," she said, "and if we stroll down to the gates we may meet a messenger from him."

But Lucy had yet to wait, to return to the house, and sit out the tedious dinner which she could not touch. Then she strolled out again, accompanied by her mother and Lady Janet, with good Pierrot following them. At length, however, a young lad dashed up to the gates and pushed them open. He rode at once to the party of ladies, while Pierrot laid his hand upon the pistol in his belt ; and a scrap of paper all covered with writing in pencil was soon in Lucy's hand.

"I have joined your father, my beloved," it said ; "he is quite well and confident. The King is at Worcester with a fine force, and no enemy between us and him. We shall march on to-morrow, and you shall have our first news ; but this is a busy time, and neither ink nor pens to be procured. In case you have any cause for alarm, go on to Buckley, as I explained to you. It is your father's advice as well as mine. A guide will meet you at the back postern gate of Childs Wickham. But in case of any evil tidings, which God forefend,

lose no time. Go on at once. We will all join you there.

“DARTMOOR.”

“Ah! dear mother!” said Lucy, with a relieved look, “this is a billet of good augury. At least Bernard says they will all join us at Buckley, and he never promises without performing.”

But Lady Langdale was busy reading another letter which the lad had given her. It had evidently been written at different times, though the latter portion bore the date of only a few hours before; but all was cheerful and full of hope, the end even more so than the beginning, for Sir Edward Langdale had by that time seen a part of the King's army, and, as is well known to have been the case with most of the Royal officers before the battle of Worcester, was very sanguine of the result. The conversation of the lad who had brought the letters, and who could give a thousand details of all that had taken place since the morning, was soothing and even gay; and during the evening Lucy's character appeared in a far brighter light to Lady Janet than it had done before. When they were about to part for the night, she patted the soft cheek, saying, “I don't wonder the boy loves you, Beauty. But do not be alarmed about him. He is one of those wild, good-for-nothing blades that always come safe out of everything.” Thus ended the second of September.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### HOPES AND FEARS.

**E**F ever day seemed to break full of calm joy and peace, it was on the third of September at Childs Wickham. Not far off, it is true, there fell some rain; and clouds even there hung upon the edge of the horizon—clouds not heavy and dark, but soft as the night bird's wing, and flecked with golden gleams. There were birds still in song too; and though the nightingale's song had ceased, yet the lark was heard pouring down its cataract of melody from a point far distant in the sky, while his lowly mate sat in the green grass and listened to his song—the image of a contented heart amidst the more ardent joys and ambitious struggles of the world.

Lucy, however, was up early. She could not sleep after the first rays of the sun had entered

her chamber, and roused her to a sense of all the troubles and cares of human existence. Rushing upon her as a flood, all the fears and doubts of the preceding day came back ; and, almost wondering how she could have slept at all, she found her way out into the park, before any one but herself was up, to indulge in solitude the feelings and the thoughts upon which even her mother's presence was a check.

She could have wept, and perhaps she did ; but her tears were not so profuse or painful as those of the day before. They were mingled with hope, with that blessed hope which has not its alternation in despair. She thought of that Almighty hand which rules the destiny of every human being ; she thought of the wisdom which rules that hand ; she thought of the boundless mercy which brings good out of evil to every creature that puts its trust in it ; she thought of the omniscient eye which sees the result of all that the ineffable will ordains. No, no, she could not despair. It was no vain expectation—no enthusiastic trust that she could escape sorrow and anxiety in this world of cares and griefs ; but it was the firm abiding faith in His wisdom and His goodness who rules over all, which brought back tranquillity, if not happiness. No, she could not despair. Though days of anguish and of terror might be before her, she knew where to find sup-

port and comfort. She was calmer when she came back to the house ; and on the steps which led up to the terrace, she met Lady Langdale, who was calm too—calm, though very grave. Her mother's eyes searched Lucy's face ; but she saw that she was more tranquil, and she was glad of what she saw. She spoke to her then ; she thought it right to speak to her of all those things which she knew were pressing on her child's heart. But it was all done gently and kindly, as a parent might search an infant's wound.

“My dear Lucy,” she said, “you have been seeking comfort, I am sure, where true comfort is to be found. Many a weary hour have I watched, when your father was absent from me, and every hour was full of danger and dismay, when I heard of battles and sieges, and brave men slain, and prisons and trials, and death ; and when I have looked upon the faces of my children, the first question that sprang up in my heart was always, Are they orphans ? But I put my trust in God, and God has not abandoned me. His ways are mysterious and past finding out ; but still He is wise and merciful, and if we know and feel that every sacrifice we make is made for His service, we may be sure He has a recompense in store for us which, if it come slowly, is sure to come at last. Have I grudged the sacrifice, Lucy, of all in a cause I judged just ? Have I withheld my hus-



band? Do I withhold my son? Would you withhold Bernard, even if you could?"

"No, no! dear mother," answered Lucy warmly, "I would not for the brightest day of happiness that life can give. But yet I must feel, dear mother; yet I must tremble when I think that all which makes existence precious is perilled on the events of the next few hours. What would life be without him? and yet it is his very excellence which makes the sacrifice worth offering. I know it—I feel it, and God's will be done! But let us talk no more on these subjects. I wish not to forget, nor to lull myself into repose. I am prepared, and, if God spare us, the mercy will be felt doubly, because we have experienced the apprehension and the grief."

The coming of Lady Janet, the breakfast hour, and the various little domestic incidents of the morning, afforded some change of thought; but towards noon a season of rumours began. Some of the yeomen and farmers of the neighbourhood, with whom the old lady seemed an especial favourite, came in to tell some small bits of news—very often altogether false. The King's army was here, the Parliament forces there, and some said a battle had been fought and won by this side or that side, according to the hopes or fears of the narrators. But Lady Janet was very shrewd and shook her head.

"The wind is north," said she, "and we can hear the great bell of Worcester when it sets that way. There has been no cannon fired this morning within ten miles of us."

But the still increasing rumours, all tending one way, showed the direction of men's minds, and displayed that vague sort of prescience of a great event which has almost always gone before one of the great battles decisive of the world's or country's fate, even when it takes place most suddenly.

Towards the afternoon, the three ladies walked out into the park, followed by good old Master Hardcastle, bearing an ivory-headed stick for the Lady Janet's use when she felt tired, and by Pierrot Lagrange, not insufficiently armed for a serving-man. Somehow, their walk was still directed towards the gates, or the low wall that divided the park from the Worcester Road. But all was quiet and silent; fewer persons than usual were seen upon the highway; and those were either labourers or market women coming from traffic in a neighbouring town. At length, however, a dull sound, resembling the commencement of a clap of thunder, but very distant and indistinct, was heard; and Pierrot stopped short, saying, in a low voice and broken English, to his companion,—

"That is a cannon shot!"

Another and another came ; not many, but sufficient to show that two hostile forces had met ; and Lucy's cheek, pale before, turned still paler, as she listened. Her hands were clasped together, and her lips moved as if in prayer. Oh, how many kindly sympathies, how many deep emotions, how much hope, and fear, and loyalty, and enthusiasm were stirred at that moment. What private, what public interests were at stake !

Lady Janet moved towards the house ; but Lady Langdale and her child remained to listen. It is a wonderful thing, old age, the tamer of strong passions and high excitements. When the grave is before us—even yawning at our feet, and the passage to another life, in all its inevitable plainness, is present, the things of the world in which we live lose their fictitious importance ; time itself dwindles to a span ; and of the warm relations of our natal day some have passed away, and the rest have lost their value. A few short hours, a few short hours, and the transitory must give way to the eternal. Hope and fear alike take wing to pass over the dark chasm, and alight upon a rock we faintly see, from which, in the far distance, all the flowers of human existence are but as the moss on a barren hill's side.

The old woman could not even fancy the sensations which then moved the hearts of Lucy and her mother, or, rather, she could not remember

them, for they were among the things come and gone, which had flourished and had faded. She walked back then to the house, and left them alone, to mark every sight and listen for every sound.

For the first hour or two there was little to be seen or heard; but then some troopers came spurring their weary horses along the road at full speed. They passed without stopping, merely gazing through the bars of the tall iron gates as they went, while several masterless horses, by habit or by instinct, followed at full gallop. Lady Langdale rested her arm upon her daughter's; but neither said a word, and there they stood.

Nearly an hour passed by, and the sky was getting gray with the approach of night, when a large party passed, and then two horsemen appeared; and one drew up at the gates. He seemed faint and weary, or wounded; for he pulled feebly at the gate in vain. He had not strength to open it.

"That is Sergeant Loftus!" exclaimed Pierrot; and he darted forward and pushed open the gates. The other did not come in, but thrust a small scrap of paper into Pierrot's hand, pointed to the two ladies, spoke a few words, and hurried on.

Lady Langdale eagerly caught the paper which Pierrot brought to her.

"From Sir Edward, lady," he said.

But Lucette, what between tears and the fading light, could hardly read the few words scrawled in pencil on the page, which seemed torn from a notebook.

They were :—

“Fly ! fly at once ! To Buckley. You will be safe there for a time. All is lost here,

“EDWARD.”

There was a dark smear of blood in the corner ; and Lady Langdale gazed on it with almost as much emotion as on the fearful lines ; but the instant after she turned to look at Lucy.

The poor girl stood still and silent, without a tear. She read a fate in the look of every one ; but Lady Langdale spoke the words which Lucy had no heart to put.

“Did he give you any news,” she said, “of the Earl ; of your young master ?”

“None, madam,” replied Pierrot ; “he seemed to know little but that the battle was lost, and many taken prisoners.”

“But not your master ?” cried the lady ; “not Sir Edward ?”

“Oh, no !” replied Pierrot ; “he was riding to St. Neots, I think he called the place, with the rest, so I believe he said ; but the man was badly wounded, and one could hardly hear him.”

Lady Langdale drew Lucy’s arm through hers.

"We must fly, my child," she said, "we must fly as we are directed ; come, Lucy, our first duty is to obey ; let us hope still."

Lucy shook her head mournfully, but suffered her mother to lead her on.

The news spread rapidly in the house. The battle had been lost ; and most of the servants gathered in knots, in various halls or rooms, to talk and marvel. The servants of Lady Langdale, and the men Bernard had left, with the exception of one, were all activity ; and Lady Janet was eager to see the guests depart.

Poor Lucy was very different from what she had appeared at the bed-side of her dying brothers. She had then to aid and to support ; she had now only to endure ; but she let the people round do what they liked with her ; and just as night was falling, the whole party were at the back postern door. They lifted Lucy on her horse—a passive, almost unconscious weight in their hands ; and then came a momentary pause, during which she looked faintly around her.

There were several horsemen, and her mother, and the maid, and a saddled horse held by the bridle close by her, but by this time it was night, and the shadow of the trees rendered the darkness more profound, so that she could distinguish little else. Just then, there came a sudden burst of light, and a part of the wall seemed to open, dis-

closing a man in a long russet coat, holding a candle in his hand. A woman's face and form appeared behind him ; but in an instant the light was extinguished, and the aperture closed. The man sprang upon the horse with a light bound, and the night ride began.

Through narrow lanes, under overhanging boughs, across brown moors, by the side of glistening waters, for more than two hours they rode on without drawing a rein ; and then they paused to let the horses drink. It was a beautiful night, and a beautiful scene ; with a high rocky bank rising upon the right at a small distance from the river, with wild shrubs, just tipped and glowing, both with the warm browns of the early autumn and the slant rays of the eastern moon. There was a breeze, too, as warm as summer, playing among the trees, with just strength enough to stir the branches and to ripple into brighter light the stream that flowed quietly along at the horses' feet. But, for poor Lucy Langdale, it had now no charm. Nay, more, it was all sad. Who has not felt that the fairest landscape, the gayest, the brightest scene, has something melancholy and depressing in its very beauty, to those for whom the loveliness of earth has passed away ? I think it is Addison who draws a picture of what earth would seem, if the sun were not to bring out the varied colours of the different objects—or rather to give those colours,

by the reflection and combination of his own many tinted rays—if all we see were of one dull leaden corpse-like hue. And happiness is the sun of the human heart, without which every hue of beauty is wanting. It had set for poor Lucy Langdale—set, as it seemed, for ever !

There had been a dead silence all the way. Not a word had been spoken ; for all knew that many an enemy might be near ; the tramp of the horses' feet was too much. But as they paused by the stream, Lady Langdale spoke in a low, gentle tone,—

“ Lucy, my love, you must not give way,” she said, “ for your father's sake, for your brother's, for mine, for your future duty's sake. God knows what He has in store for you ! You must be ready. You must not give way.”

“ I will not, dear mother,” answered Lucy, “ but give me a little time ;” and she tried to rouse herself. But, as they rode on again, bodily strength seemed to fail her, and she swayed in the saddle.

“ Are you sleepy, my daughter ? ” said the monk, who rode by her side.

“ Sleepy ! ” said Lucy, in a tone of wonder almost touching upon contempt, that any one could dream she could sleep at such a time—  
“ sleepy ! ”





## CHAPTER XXIV.

### BATTLE OF WORCESTER.

**D**ID you ever see a battle, dear reader? Perhaps not; but be assured of this, that wherever or however it happens, it is a very different thing from that which it appears on paper. The eye even of the commander, let him deserve or not deserve the favourite epithet of poets and romance-writers, "eagle-eyed," sees comparatively little of what is going on. He divines rather than sees. His orders are given; the regiments may march to obey; some slight intimation, some confusion in the enemy's ranks, some farmhouse on fire, some colours borne swiftly across the field; the furious galloping of red coats or blue, may tell him whether those orders have been successful or not; but all the rest is smoke, and dust, and confusion. Each body of men may see all that is going on immediately around them, but they rarely see much farther; and all that their General can tell, like all

that the historian relates, are the general facts. The highest topped hill, the clearest eye, the strongest spy-glass cannot take in all.

I cannot describe the battle of Worcester, for I was not there, and historians are as unreliable as novelists. I would not if I could ; for, right or wrong, I have described too many battles already ; but I may attach myself for a little time to a small group, and try to state what became of the men of which it was composed.

I will not keep my listeners long with the details of such an uninteresting thing as fighting. This shall be a short chapter—the shortest, perhaps, that ever was written, except some in the best book of Sir Edward Lytton, who, with wonderful skill, knows how to present a perfect picture to the reader's eye, and to stop the moment that picture is complete.

It was towards the last hour of the day : the last fatal charge had been made, and the genius of Cromwell, and the steady discipline of his veteran troops had in reality triumphed over the enthusiastic but irregular resistance of his opponents. A large body of cavaliers, as is well known, were driven back almost to the walls of Worcester, and there penned up, either to surrender at discretion, or to stand the murderous charge of the superior and victorious army. The thunder-cloud was but hanging for a moment, ready to descend, when a

small knot of officers held hasty consultation in front of the broken royalist line.

"Let us yield," said an old man ; "it is vain to resist. The cannon are all taken, my lord ; the King, pray God ! has fled ; the right is in disorder, the left in total rout. We have nothing for it but to yield on the best terms we may. Shall I raise a white flag ?"

"Yield!" cried the Earl of Dartmoor. "Sir, I never yielded, and will not begin to-day. I can die here or yonder, but I do not yield. Sir Edward, one word with you," and he spoke a few words apart to Sir Edward Langdale. All that was heard by those around was—"Cut our way through—I have done it before—it is quite possible." Then came a few words unheard, and then he said, "As short as possible. Give one to Sergeant Loftus. He is stout and unhurt. The other to Strange. His left arm is broken, but he fears not wounds, and may make his way through. Some must fall of course, but let the rest push on at once. Henry's right hand is useless. You lead his horse. I will protect the rear. If you see them again, my best and dearest love. Say I died as a soldier should die. Now write, for I cannot. My hand is hurt. I will order the men."

Sir Edward tore some leaves from his note-book, and wrote hastily the words we have seen, on three separate pages ; but in the meantime the Earl

rode hastily along the front, speaking some words of bold courage to the men, and then resumed his place. All passed in a few moments, and then waving his sword over his head, he exclaimed—

“They are thin and broken in the centre. Charge there, my lads ; charge there, and we will cut through. Heaven ! they are bringing the cannon against us. Charge, for your lives !”

More than three hundred stuck their spurs into their horses' sides, and were hurled like a thunder-bolt against the long and now irregular line of infantry in front. But they were opposed to tried and veteran troops. A steady fire, a row of bristling pikes met the advancing horse, and many a saddle was left vacant in that desperate charge. The men dashed on, it is true, no one wavered or drew the rein ; but not more than fifty appeared on the other side of the Parliamentary line. Even then, there was a strong body of horse at some distance on their right flank, and a nearer but not numerous force of musketeers upon the left.

Still Sir Edward Langdale, holding his son's bridle in his left hand, was at the head of the troop ; and still the Earl of Dartmoor, supported by two or three gallant soldiers, dashed out from the cloud of enemies. It was now a chase for life. The hostile cavalry wheeled as if to pursue ; but by the order of some one—who it was is not known—maintained their ground. But the mus-

keteers, seeing they could not come up with them, poured a terrible fire upon their flank. Many a bullet told, and many a horseman fell; but on rode Sir Edward, till he thought that flight was open, and he exclaimed,

“Now scatter! We give them too good a mark in this close order. Bernard, for Heaven’s sake, come up!”

As he spoke, he looked round to the young Earl, who, the last man of all the troop, was riding quietly, without the slightest sign of hurry or dismay.

Too glad to escape the balls which were pouring fast among them, the men dispersed, and Sir Edward saw them gallop off, each seeking some place of refuge, except two or three who followed him close; he himself spurred on. Still gazing back, however, there was another volley from the musketeers. It was distant, and not very well directed. The balls passed innocuous behind the good Knight and his son, and the few men near them. But Lord Dartmoor was riding at the distance of some forty or fifty yards, and Sir Edward saw him and his horse stagger and roll over on the ground. For an instant the Knight checked his horse, and his first impulse was to ride back to aid his noble friend; but he looked at his wounded son, who was pale and weak with loss of blood and his heart was torn with contending feelings.

"Oh, save him, father, save him!" cried the generous boy, who at once divined what was passing in his father's bosom.

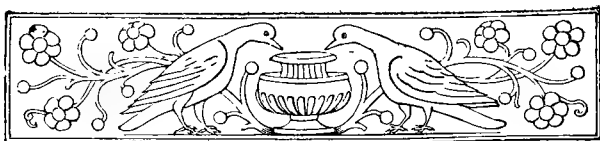
Sir Edward turned his horse, but one of his men caught the bridle, crying almost angrily,—

"Are you mad, sir? Do you not see the pikemen are coming up? You cannot reach him."

It was too true, and with a heavy sigh, and an exclamation of "God's will be done!" Sir Edward grasped his son's rein, almost convulsively, and rode on.

"Poor Lucy!" murmured Henry Langdale, and he shut his eyes.





## CHAPTER XXV.

### REST AFTER FLIGHT.

**F**UCY LANGDALE rode on. The proposal to stop and repose at a lone cottage, where a light was still burning, seemed only to revive her powers ; and when told that it was necessary that the horses should have some food and rest, she dismounted slowly and unwillingly. It was now past midnight, and when the door of the small building was pushed open and the two ladies entered, they found the first little room tenanted only, apparently, by a pale, emaciated woman, not more, it would have seemed, than two or three and twenty years of age—but upon whose hectic cheek and faded brow misery seemed to have written ages of painful life. She started as they came in and raised her hand with a warning gesture looking towards a small bed in the corner of

the room, sheltered by a tattered blanket from the wind of the door.

"Hush!" she said, "you will wake her. It is the first sleep for days."

But, as she spoke, several of the men hurried in, demanded aloud some food for their horses, and a small, weak cry came from the little bed. The woman darted to its side, and Lady Langdale turned thither also, saying,—

"Be quiet, sirs, be quiet! Do not disturb the poor thing. She has a sick child."

She was not to have one much longer. Startled suddenly by the noise, the dying child awoke, and the mother lifted it carefully to her knee, not seeing or caring who might be around. Lady Langdale and Lucy both hurried to help her, for there was a fearful and unusual sound about the infant's breathing, which both had seen in other cases, and they gave that aid the mother was little capable of giving herself. The child had evidently been long ill; life had sunk to but a flickering flame, and the first rude breath blew it out.

There was a short but violent effort to cough, and then a spasmodic stretching of the limbs, a slight shudder, and it lay upon its mother's knee without motion. She parted the thin flaxen hair upon its forehead, and then looked up, saying,—

"God's will be done! It is over!"

"Where is your husband, my poor woman?"



said Lady Langdale, while Lucy, with gentle hands, did some of the offices of the dead for the poor child. "Have you no neighbours?"

The bereaved mother shook her head mournfully.

"No neighbours for two miles," she answered; "and as for my husband, he is where he always is, at the tavern drinking with ruffians, and gamblers, and night poachers. You will find him there as you go on; for, woe's me! your people will find neither drink nor food here. Oh, send him back if you find him; and tell him his child is dead. That may rouse him, perhaps."

Lady Langdale gave her some money to "help for the funeral," she said; but the poor thing looked at it, and shook her head, replying,—

"He will take it from me; and beat me too, perhaps."

They did what they could to console and advise her; but they were obliged to leave her soon; and Lucy, as was her wont, applied the moral of what she had seen to her own heart, saying softly to Lady Langdale, as they rode away,—

"I have been ungrateful, mother! I will be so no longer."

Two more miles, long miles as they seemed, for the horses were in want of food, and moved languidly, brought them to a larger and apparently better frequented, but still solitary house, where there was a faded garland hanging from a tall

pole before the door ; and, though it was so late, lights and waking people within. There was a good deal of noise too, and altogether the appearance of the place was not inviting.

Lady Langdale and her party judged it best, on all accounts, to remain without ; but some refreshment was needed for the horses, and one of the men went in while the rest dismounted. Several of the inmates then came forth and gazed at the new-comers as well as they could, by the pale moonbeams, and the light of the hostler's lantern. Some oats and some thick slices of bread, according to the German custom, were given to the horses ; and, to those which Lucy and Lady Langdale rode, a large bowl of ale was supplied—following a fashion then very common in the midland counties of England.

It would have been difficult to say to what class, or party, or pursuit those who came forth from the house belonged. The disruption of every old established rule, and the division of society into several well-marked parties, left—without taking into account the time-shifting hypocrites who attached themselves to this or that section, as it served their turn—a large mass of loose characters who found in the disturbances of the times an opportunity of indulgence, and a vast scope for license. This was peculiarly the case in those parts of the country where, as was

the case with the district through which the little party of Lady Langdale was now passing, the population was sparse, and the severe rule of the religious sects could not be brought to bear. In fact, in every great popular commotion, between the parties struggling for opposing laws, there is sure to be left a large number of persons who have no law at all.

Lucky for Lady Langdale that she had several stout men well armed in her party ; for the men who had been assembled inside the house, after having surveyed them with very suspicious looks, and who might probably have taken advantage of a solitary part of the country and a moment of great confusion had they dared, retired into the ale-house again, except one young man, who remained with the hostler, and whose face was often seen by the light of the moon.

It was not a prepossessing face, though handsome. It was stupid but yet cunning, and there were evident traces of hard drink about the eyes and the corners of the mouth ; and Lucette convinced herself that he was the husband of the poor girl they had lately left. As he walked prying about, examining as closely as he could both the horses and the persons of whom the party was composed, he came more than once near Lady Langdale, and once so close that she determined to speak to him.

“Do you know, young man,” she said, “one Jabez Brown, about this house?”

“Know him!” said the young man, starting like a guilty thing, “but there is more than one Jabez Brown; and very good folks too. What is he, dame? who is he?”

“He is a young man,” answered Lady Langdale, coldly, “who leaves his child to die, and his wife to want, while he spends his time and his money in taverns. You are the man—you know it? Hurry home, hurry home! You will find your poor child dead, and your wife half-starving.”

“The child dead!” cried the sot; “time I should be home, indeed! I will just take something to keep up my spirits, and run back. Could not your ladyship give me a groat, just for looking to your horses?”

“Not for such a purpose,” answered Lady Langdale, “you have drunk enough.”

But Pierrot, who was standing near, and perhaps had some fellow-feeling still, threw the lad a small piece of silver, accompanying it with some good advice, delivered in not the best English that ever was spoken.

The lad darted into the house again, and the moment after he was seen standing near the casement, through which the light was shining, with a horn in his hand, and an elderly man talking to him eagerly.

"You should not have given him anything, Pierrot," said Lady Langdale.

But Pierrot contented himself with saying, "Grief is always dry, Madame, as I know to my sorrow;" and the next moment the bits were put in the horses' mouths and the little party prepared to go on.

The lad and the elderly man came forth, and seemed to scrutinize every person closely, especially the young trooper who had brought Lord Dartmoor's letter on the second of the month, and was now with the well-loved friends to whom it had been sent; but no one said anything: the score was paid, and on they rode.

Still, that night ride was lovely. The moon is up late at that time of year. It is then, as it were, the carnival of the skies, and all the starry crowd go revelling till day comes in; but Lucy Langdale knew little of the scenes through which she passed. She was too weary; she was too woebegone to mark anything distinctly. Hill and dale went by, brown moor and richly cultivated land, without producing any definite impression, like clouds reflected, as they skim past, from a piece of shining water. She sought to think, but she could not. She sought to recall the incidents in the little cottage where the child had died before her eyes, and to fix the moral she had drawn upon her heart, for future support and guidance; but it was

all dim, and moving, and misty; and though she could not be said to sleep, she dreamed waking.

The objects she passed looked strange unreal forms: a tree became the sail of a ship; the shocks of corn tables laid out for a feast; the river that flowed by a troop of cavalry in bright armour. Some were gay and pleasant, or homely and insignificant images, some were very sad, as slight recollections of terrible facts clung about the exhausted brain—battles, and executions, and funerals.

During the latter part of the time that this state lasted, Lady Langdale rode on one side of her child, and the monk on the other in earnest conversation, begun by the former seeking some information of the latter, who was unable to tell her anything; but it continued on matters of deep interest, as it appeared from their manner. Both spoke in French, and the man, who at first answered her questions in grave and solemn tones, became gradually more and more excited, speaking loud and fast, till at length Lady Langdale raised her hand from the rein, saying "Hush, hush! If it be so, brother, speak low. There are many here, behind, who can understand the tongue you use. But you are mistaken. He bears no rancour. Though sometimes stern and decided, he is kind and generous. My husband needs no repentance, no compensation. An outstretched hand and a

kindly word is always sufficient atonement to him”

“My husband!” repeated the monk; “my husband!” and both kept silence till, just as the yellow day was breaking, they rode into the small town of St. Neots. Then, as they came near the little inn, Lady Langdale said, “For heaven’s sake! ride up and ascertain if we can rest an hour or two in safety. This poor child is nearly dead with grief and fatigue. We cannot go farther without some repose, and Buckley is about twelve miles distant. But be cautious.”

The monk rode on to the door of the inn, where an early housemaid was washing down and sanding the stone steps, just as one may see any morning in the present day. The slipshod drawer, or waiter, was soon at the horseman’s side; and before he could well hear any questions, addressed to him, inquired, “What news from Worcester?”

“I have none,” said the other; “we do not come from Worcester, but from Childs Wickham, where we heard of armies and approaching battle, and were glad to get away from the strife. Have you any tidings?”

“Some say a battle has been fought and the King has won the day,” replied the man; “but I judge it is not true. There will be no fight to-morrow. Noll was too far behind, though yesterday

was his lucky day, and he would fight on the third of September if he could."

"Well, Heaven send that we may be able to get out of the way before the strife begins," said the monk; "have you any room where those three ladies can repose for an hour or two, till the horses are refreshed?"

"Surely, surely!" said the other; "though we are not very well prepared for guests so early in the morning, now that the carriers go the other road."

The matter was easily settled. It was evident that as yet no certain news of Worcester fight had reached St. Neots; and Lucy and her mother were led to a large neat room without being seen by any one but the waiter and the housemaid. The latter seemed as stupid as an owl, but the former was quick, gay, and garrulous; and his face had a look of good-humoured frankness, well calculated to disarm suspicion even in those times of doubt and fear.

All that the ladies required was a little rest, but the men and horses needed food, and that was soon prepared. Well warned beforehand, those who assembled round the cold beef and ale kept perfect silence over all the events of the last few days; but the drawer was not without his own suspicions, and he took care to examine closely, though with seeming carelessness, the persons of the guests.



Of the monk he could make nothing. He was unarmed, and seemingly a man of peace. The rest were well provided with weapons ; but that was nothing extraordinary in those dangerous times, and neither cut nor scratch, nor drop of blood, gave any evidence of recent strife. Baffled in the inn, he went out with the hostler to the stable, but there he was not much more successful. The horses had evidently travelled far, and were so weary, that at first some of them would not eat ; but there was no sign of war upon them ; and the man was forced to rest satisfied with the conclusion that these early guests were running away from the approaching conflict.

As the morning advanced, however, fresh and fast came rumours, more consistent and truth-like, of the fatal results of Worcester field. The servants of the house, too, began by eight o'clock to appear in greater numbers ; and though most of them had some leaning towards the Royal cause, and no great affection for the saints, who, in St. Neots, busily preached against ale and strong waters, and various vanities, of which barmaids as well as tapsters are fond, yet curiosity was becoming too much excited to have proved very convenient to Lady Langdale's party, when, about ten, the horses were again saddled and the guests upon their way.

Oh, it was a beautiful day, and the ride was

beautiful, too ; not from any picturesque features in the scenery, but from the green peacefulness of the shady hedgerows, and the soothing flow of little streams. After a two hours' ride, various well-known objects began to present themselves to Lady Langdale's eyes. Nor were they totally forgotten by Lucy ; for they recalled vague impressions of early years, when she had been there for the last time with her father and mother.

Perhaps the best balm for her bruised heart, at that moment, was the memory of infancy.

Shortly after the hour of noon, the woods and gardens of Buckley House began to appear ; and the monk drew up his horse, pointing forward, saying, " There is the end of your journey. I must ride on, for I have other things before me, but if you tarry six-and-thirty hours, you will see me there. If not, we shall meet again, God willing."

Lucette was about to direct her horse to the front gates ; but the monk exclaimed, " By the back way, through the wood. Let no prying eyes see you enter, if you can help it. We have left too many traces of our journey already. But, above all, remember your promise."

Lucette bowed her head, and while the monk rode on, the rest of the party took their way through a little beech wood, and entered the courtyard at the back of the house.

All the doors, except the great gates of the yard, were locked, and Pierrot rang the bell for some time in vain ; but at length a head appeared at a side window of the floor above, and the moment after, steps were heard running down the stone stairs within the house. Bars were taken down, and keys were turned, and the door was thrown quietly open. In an instant Lucette sprang from her horse, and was in her husband's arms ; but they were obliged to lift Lucy to the ground ; and as her father pressed her also to his heart, her eye wandered past him to some servants who were standing behind.

A spark of hope had lingered. It was gone !





## CHAPTER XXVI.

TRACKED.

**W**E who write books—ay, even the best of us—are very much accustomed to confine our painting to a single character, instead of giving a broad view of human nature. It is especially the characteristic of the present school and day ; but it has always been so, more or less, in every branch of art when it was touching its decline. Murillo lowered himself from heaven's queen and hosts of angels to beggar boys of Seville. Raphael descended—if Raphael could descend—to portrait painting ; and Phidias would leave the mightier triumphs of his art to hew a single Grace.

Perhaps he was right. The mind of man is narrow, and can hardly comprehend the larger views of things. The portraits of a hump-backed

pot-boy, well limned with every patch or speck of dirt upon his coat ; a queer costermonger, with a catalogue of every carrot and turnip in his cart, and a glossary of his peculiar dialect, will please more than Milton's "Paradise Lost" or Tasso's "Gerusalemme"—and rightly, too ; for the mass of mankind are of small minds, and small minds cannot take in large subjects.

Of course I speak not of myself ; for Heaven knows I have but rarely and incidentally attempted anything like large views—even then quietly attempting to insinuate them upon the reader's consideration, with a sneaking sort of timidity, instead of making them the end and object of the book ; but in this work I have especially devoted all my efforts to paint one character, "The Cavalier," and have drawn the ideal from the real ; for few will read these pages who have any knowledge of English history, without identifying the character of Lord Dartmoor with that of one who lived and wrought and gloried in the times of "The Great Rebellion."

But this sort of character-painting has its inconveniences, too, as well as its facilities. What am I to do, now that he is off the scene ? Having made him the prominent figure, with a very sketchy background, having toned down all accessories, and yet not finished the picture, where are the touches to go which must complete the work ?

The only way is to follow history and nature, and work the picture out.

It was the evening of the second day after Lady Langdale arrived at Buckley when the whole party sat in the large drawing-room, upon the first—not the ground-floor of the mansion. The heavy wooden window shutters were up, and indeed had never been taken down; for it was advisable to keep the house as much in the ancient state as possible. The men and the horses were concealed about the stables, and only one had gone out at a time to procure provisions or to make inquiries as to ships upon the sea-coast or in the Wash, capable of carrying away a large party from those disastrous shores. Young Henry Langdale was there, with his hand bandaged up, but evidently recovering from his wound; and Lady Langdale and Lucy, very sad, but calm. There, too, sat Sir Edward Langdale, with an open book before him, reading the evening service of the Church to his children and his wife—finding that strength and consolation in prayer to the All-powerful, which can only be found in Him when our own strength and power fail. There were some of the servants, too, in the holy equality of worship—the only equality that earth can really ever know, except the equality of the grave.

He finished and closed the book; and then advancing to Lucy's side, he said, in the tones of gentle parental love,—

"Let us hope, my child. I know that a state of doubt is often more painful than a fatal certainty; but yet it is necessary for you to view things as they really are. Our gallant Bernard may have fallen; he may be a prisoner in the enemy's hands; but he may be safe—he may be free. Not long ago, I was forced to wander for months through this land with hardly where to lay my head; and yet I rejoined you all safely, and am here this day. I would not encourage hope, Lucy; for, as I told you, I saw his horse and himself fall, in the midst of the enemy; but I would discourage despair; for many a man, in worse plight than that, survives for after happiness."

"If he be dead," said Lucy, "I would fain see where they have laid him, and let my tears fall upon his grave. If he be living, a captive or wounded, I would fain be with him. Think, dear father, what may be his sufferings even now, and how he may long for some support!" and she murmured, while the tears overflowed her eyelids, the words of his song,—

" 'Where is that love, while sad and mangled lying,  
On the dark battle-field my limbs are cast,  
And my crushed heart for long gone moments sighing  
Turns faintly back into the happy past.'

What comfort might not his poor Lucy be to him even now!"

"My child, you hardly understand a man's heart," said Sir Edward Langdale. "If Bernard is

alive and free, we shall soon see him; but if he be wounded or a prisoner, he would far rather bear his lot alone, whatever it might be, than see you exposed to all the terrible circumstances which your love might prompt you to encounter for his sake. See who is that below," he continued, turning to one of the servants, several of whom were still in the room. "I hear a step upon the terrace."

The man hurried out; and Sir Edward with the rest sat and listened somewhat eagerly; for every one there present well knew that the fate of each and all depended on a moment, or on the most trifling accident.

They had to wait in that sort of painful expectation for several minutes, however; for many were the precautions taken at the gates of Buckley before any one was admitted, and signs and countersigns were given, as if the place had been a fort; but at length steps came up the stairs, and the servant returned, followed by good old Pierrot, booted and spurred from a journey.

"So soon back, Pierrot!" exclaimed Sir Edward Langdale; "I fear you have failed."

But the man's countenance was gay, and he answered,—

"No, no, Sir Edward. I have succeeded. There is a ship—a little one enough, it is true, but still it is a ship; and you have travelled in less, I trow;—but a ship is lying at Lynn. The master is a good



heartly old cavalier, and has willingly hired himself to carry over some friends of King Charles. When the tide serves to-morrow, which is about eleven o'clock, he says he will up anchor and sail along the coast, so that if there are some people on the sands, about three o'clock, and they raise a red flag, he will send off a boat to take them on board."

To every one but poor Lucy this was welcome news, but the thought of leaving the shores of England in ignorance of Bernard's fate, and with every reason for the darkest apprehension, came cold to her heart, though she would not by a word of entreaty or remonstrance have imperilled the safety of her brother or her father. A deep sigh was the only utterance she gave to her grief; and Sir Edward proceeded to inquire if Pierrot had found the roads clear, or if the news of the recent battle, now known over the whole land, had created any confusion which might impede their journey early on the following morning.

"All quiet, sir," answered Pierrot; "above Lynn I saw some good folks in knots of six or seven, but on this side there were less people than usual. Indeed, for the last two miles, I only met with one person, and that was odd enough."

Sir Edward Langdale took no notice of the last part of the reply; but Lady Langdale, who was more timid, asked,—

"How was it odd, Pierrot?"

“Why, miladi, I saw the fellow twice, close by the gate here,” said the man. “I saw him quite plain by the moonlight; and if I am not much mistaken it was that lad we saw at the tavern, to whom I gave a groat—the same bad young fellow whose baby died when we were at the cottage.”

Lucette laid her hand suddenly on her husband's arm, saying,—

“Listen to him, Edward! The place where we saw this man is more than twenty miles distant. He must have traced us hither.”

Sir Edward asked some questions, and seemed satisfied with the answers; but Lucette, who knew him better than any one there, saw a slight shade come over his brow, from which she augured rightly that all was not quite at ease within.

With very loving hearts, it is often a fault to accuse one's self unjustly, if anything goes wrong, in cases where we must act and others must suffer.

Lucette marked the shade upon her husband's brow, and scanned closely all the events which had occurred upon the road in which the young man spoken of by Pierrot had been concerned, without discovering that she had been in error; but still she thought that somehow she must have done wrong. But Edward Langdale, as I have before said, loved as dearly as when she had first

given herself to him. There may be some who do not and cannot believe this—a few women and many men—but his love, if not founded and directed simply by esteem, had been strengthened, nourished, perpetuated by respect. We may love a fool for an hour, but no man of sense can love a fool long. In the end, Reason triumphs over Passion.

“Let us take some repose, my love, and set out before daybreak,” he said; “I like not this youth’s having followed your party; but in such a long and hurried ride, some traces of your course must have been left. You and Lucy retire. Henry must get some sleep if he can. I will give orders that a strict watch be kept; but I trust that, as his Majesty has escaped towards Lyme, Cromwell’s attention will be diverted in another course. Now try for repose—good Heaven! what is that?”

“A petard, Sir Edward,” said Pierrot, coolly. “You should know the sound right well. Shall we stand to our arms? We are enough to maintain the house till to-morrow night, if they be not in large force.”

Before the knight could answer, a number of terrified servants from below rushed into the room by the door on its left hand, and Lady Langdale and Lucy, who were already moving to retire to rest, found the other exit closed by a body of grisly musketeers, with matches lighted.

"Down with your arms!" cried a loud and peremptory voice on the right, as a still larger party of armed men followed the affrighted servants into the room; "down with your arms, or we fire!"

"You are in a great hurry," said Sir Edward Langdale, without moving a muscle: "let me know who commands, and perhaps I may obey."

"Who commands: The Lord General, of course," replied the soldier; "he will be here anon. Down with your arms, I say."

"They are but few," replied the knight, "and such as every gentleman has a right to wear; but as you say the Lord General commands you, to him you are answerable."

Thus saying, he placed his sword and pistols on the table, as did all the rest. Then advancing to his wife's side, he kissed her, and said,—

"You had better retire to rest, my love. These men, of course, will not attempt to stop a lady."

"I opine we must stop every one," said a tall, thin man, in not very military attire; "we have heard that the young Charles Stuart is here, and woman's garments sometimes cover as malignant vipers as he."

"You have heard very wrong," said Sir Edward, coolly; "please God, King Charles is far beyond your reach. But these are ladies—my wife and

daughter—and do not look like hardy cavaliers, I trow."

At that moment another man, apparently an officer, by his dress, pushed by the man at the door, and advanced towards Sir Edward Langdale, saying,—

"What is all this? they have offered no violence, I hope?"

"Not actual violence," replied the knight; "but though we have all given up our swords, they would fain prevent these ladies from retiring to their rooms, fearing that a wimple or a hood may conceal the person of the King."

"We have good information that he is here," said the officer, "but, methinks, from all I have heard, he is not much like either of those ladies. They may go; but as I perceive this house is divided into corridors, they must submit to have a sentry at the end of that which they inhabit—at least till the Lord General arrives."

"I beseech you, sir, wake them not even when he does arrive," answered Sir Edward, with an air of greater coolness than perhaps he felt. "We have been somewhat startled already to-night by a loud explosion, from which I fear my gates have suffered."

"It was needful to blow them open," answered the other, with a grim smile, "since a petard was the only porter we seemed likely to find. Ladies,

good-night! Nay, neither words nor signs, if you please," and not without some show of courtesy he handed Lucy and her mother to the door.

• "Now, sir," he continued, returning to Sir Edward, "we must dispose of you and your followers for a few hours, till your case is passed upon by a power superior to mine. We have certain information that those ladies, with several horsemen, passed from Worcester to St. Neots, three nights ago, having young Charles Stuart in their company."

"Your certain information is wrong, sir," replied the knight; "not one of them, that I know of, has ever been at Worcester. My wife, my daughter, and their maid, with a small body of men for their protection, scampered away to St. Neots, probably to be out of the way of strife; but that they ever had his Majesty in their company, or that he is here now, I know to be false. You can search the whole house if you please; it is of very simple construction."

"We have taken care of all that," replied the officer, with a significant nod. "We shall hear more presently. In the meantime, who is that?" and he pointed to Henry.

"Master Henry Langdale, my only son," replied the knight.

"He seems to have hurt his hand," said the other, gazing fixedly at the youth.

"Yes," replied the knight, dryly, "boys will seek dangerous sports."

"True," said the officer, and then turning towards the young man who had borne letters on the second of the month to Childs Wickham, he asked: "and that lad—who is he?"

"The son of one of my tenants," answered Sir Edward; "stand forward, Richard. This gentleman may soon convince himself."

"Neither the same height nor the same complexion," observed the officer, comparing the youth's features with a written paper he drew from his pocket. "He does not seem to have been in any dangerous sports."

"None that I know of," replied Sir Edward; "the person who misinformed you must have done so in hope of some reward. But I give you my word of honour, as a gentleman and a knight, that King Charles, if you are seeking him, is not here, and never has been."

"Perhaps so," replied the officer, bowing his head; "but we must do our duty. The house must be fully searched; and, in the meantime, I must hold all here present, but my own men, prisoners of war, till the Lord General's arrival. I fear we have been led astray. Woe be to those who did it!"

He was a prompt, quick man, and Sir Edward doubted not a good soldier. A separate room near the hall was assigned to the master of the house,

and his son and one or two others were placed in chambers near. The chambers were examined well, the doors locked and bolted, a sentry placed before each, and the rest of the men were shut up in a large dining-hall apart, and, while the officer and his soldiers proceeded to a stricter search of the house, were left to meditate upon the sudden reversal of all their hopes of an escape on the morrow.







## CHAPTER XXVII.

### ARRIVAL OF THE LORD GENERAL.



THAT a wonderful and blessed thing is night, when nature withdraws the stimulus poured upon the brain through the little channel of the eye, and all the cares and fatigues of the past day, like sour nurses, who have been cross with the wayward child till it was weary, turn kind and compassionate at last, and rock the mind to sleep. "The blanket of the dark," Shakspeare calls it, and contrasts it with heaven. Now, doubtless there is many a wicked thing done behind the blanket ; but I see not why the misuse of any of Heaven's best gifts by man and man's passions, should take away from the value of that gift. The best boon that ever was conveyed can be abused ; and we have no one to thank for the evil but ourselves. When God created the evil and the good, He permitted the evil, but ordained

the good, and left man to choose between them. Shall we presume to blame God for what He permitted? Shall we repine that He left us free agents? Shall we justify ourselves by thinking that He did not bind us while He created us, but left us to choose for ourselves? Let us rather deplore the weakness which we have engendered and encouraged in our own hearts, repent of each evil that has brought others in its train, and thank Him, who has given us blessings we deserved not, freedom which we have ourselves abused, a thousand guides into the right path to whose voice we would not listen, and yet has called us home even at the last, if we will but obey the voice of Him who sent us forth.

Little children, listen unto me, and let not all the mercies of the Lord be given in vain.

The man who invented lamps, I think, did more harm than good. He extended the time of strife and turmoil; he abridged the period of repose and peace; he gave to active thought and mental labour more than their fair share of life; he crowded existence with act; he deprived exertion of repose. Some men, indeed, can cast from them in a moment the memory of strife and trouble, and find at once the balm provided by God for the daily bruises of the conflict. I know a minister who is so happily constituted, that after the most fiery debate, the most eager struggle, he can lie

down and sleep as calmly as a child. Such a man was Sir Edward Langdale. The soldiers, when they locked the door, left him a light ; but in a few moments he blew it out, and stretched upon the bed, went sound asleep. He had, it is true, a wife, a son, a daughter, all prisoners in that house ; but he had prayed to God for them, and in Him he trusted. The darkness relieved the overwrought brain, fatigue and watching gave down to the pillow, and slumber visited him unasked.

It was past ten, well nigh eleven, when the good knight lay down, and in the house there was many a sound for more than an hour after. Every room, every closet—I might say every cranny—which had not been searched before, was strictly visited ; and the stables and the chambers over them were examined. The horses were counted, too, but they were fewer than the inmates of the house, and unless some one had already departed, it was evident that the Parliamentary party had possession of all who had lately arrived, for all the beasts bore evidence of toil and travel, and some were slightly wounded. An old man and woman, too, who had been found in the kitchen, were cross-questioned rigorously, but they merely stated that they had been on the premises for years. They had remained from the time Sir Edward and his lady had left, some years before, had been ejected by sequestrators, restored when the sequestration

was taken off, and had seen no one enter the place since but Sir Edward, who had come on the fourth of September with his son, whom they remembered as a boy, and a few followers, and Lady Langdale and her daughter, who had come afterwards with some attendants. The whole party they described and counted, and on comparing, the numbers showed that the account tallied exactly with that of the prisoners within. All this did not take place without a good deal of noise, for the soldiers did not moderate their tones out of reverence for the repose of the sleepers, and sometimes a tongue was heard shouting from the bottom to the top of the house, when any fancied discovery was made. The leader himself retired to the dining-hall, and the cellar having been opened by a key which fitted all locks, proceeded to console the inner man with the best he could find. Food was not very abundant, indeed, but the wine was good, and to him it seemed to supply very satisfactorily the paucity of more solid meat. It made him not merry in the least, however. He remained grave and gloomy, muttering to himself more than once,—

“We have been cheated, that is clear. The Lord General will be in a fine humour!”

But all the noise in the house did not waken Sir Edward Langdale, who had been accustomed to sleep in more troublous scenes than that. Indeed,

the ending of anxiety and excitement, the termination, as it seemed to him, of exertion and expectation, probably tended to render his slumber more profound. He knew the house too well to imagine escape possible from the room in which he was confined; he knew the men in whose hands he was too well to think they would show mercy to a royalist taken in arms. The officer, however, waked and kept watch, while his prisoner slept so quietly, and his mind, at least, was evidently not at ease.

The sounds within the building were not the only ones which broke the silence of that night. Towards two o'clock, the galloping of horse coming along the road was heard, then the challenge of a sentry placed upon the terrace garden which separated the house from the highway, and then several voices speaking below. At the foot of the great staircase some one seemed to stop and talk for a minute or two with the soldier there on guard. There could be heard a deep, slow voice putting questions, and the short but apparently respectful answers of an inferior. At length several steps began to move up the staircase, and the officer rose, composed his countenance, and gazed towards the door. At length—for the new comers did not hurry themselves—the door opened, and a small party entered. The first was a man of middle height—rather above than below it—powerful and

muscular in frame, but not at all obese. He wore a simple grey coat, with a plain linen collar, and a tall, unornamented black hat. His face, as far as features and colouring went, was decidedly coarse and plain, the features generally large and heavy, and the nose especially thick and ill-shaped ; but the brow was massy and powerful, and the brownish-grey eye, though it had no fire, had a world of stern, grey power in it, and seemed to menace and rule all it fell upon. It was by far the finest feature in the face, and those who looked at and could bear it, forgot in a moment the heavy nose and somewhat animal mouth, the coarse, greasy complexion, and the thin, straggling hair, and felt as if they had before them one of the rulers of old Rome. The whole expression, indeed—and it spread through the entire figure—was that of command. A consciousness of power was in every line and in every movement ; and yet, strange to say, during the scenes that followed, there was once or twice upon that face—for a moment, and only for a moment—a look of keen cunning, ay, and at times a look of soft weakness. Such was the person who entered a step or two before the rest. Behind him were two Parliamentary officers, evidently of inferior rank. Then came a soldier or two, with a gentleman seemingly wounded, but who bore, in a cord passed over his arms, the evidence of being a prisoner. In their hands, too, but not tied, was the abject-looking form of the young Jabez Brown,

whose low, terrified, and crouching demeanour offered a strange contrast to the firm step and upright carriage of the wounded man before him, who, notwithstanding his bonds, entered with a fearless look, which quailed not for a moment, though it had no rashness or bravado about it.

Without a word, the first man who entered walked straight across the room and seated himself in the chair at the end of the table without taking off his hat. He sat for a moment or two in calm silence, and then turning his head slightly towards the officer who continued standing by his side, he said,—

“Verily Captain Lampton, we have had a long and a quick ride to-night, but we heard some good news of thee at the foot of the staircase. Thou hast taken this nest of malignants and all that it contains, but is the news all good? Truly we must smite and spare not. Having put our hand to the plough, we must not turn back——”

He paused, but kept gazing at the other with a look which was difficult to translate, but such was the power of that rude countenance that Lampton, who would probably have fronted a whole squadron of pikes without quailing, stood stammering and hesitating unable to answer.

“Tut! man,” said Cromwell, at length, with a clearer brow than the other expected. “Never stand humming. It is an exceeding good thing, Captain Lampton, and a point of wisdom when we have matters of great moment to consider, which

may involve mighty consequences, not to be too prompt of reply, and to let that reply be somewhat doubtful or in other words evasive, in order that we have full time, yea, even while we are speaking, to consider and resolve what the final and decisive answer should be. The present is a mere matter of yea and nay. But we have heard all below and know what thou wouldst say, if thou didst but say anything. Thou hast not succeeded fully, and we have been led astray by the tidings of yonder ill-looking knave. For that reason we have brought him up here, for with the first light to-morrow, we will examine all the prisoners, and if we find that he has had some reasonable cause for his mistake—that he has shown himself merely an officious fool rather than a wily trickster, he shall have the reward of fools. If not, he shall hang. At present I will take some repose; but mind that wounded man be guarded well. He was found hiding in a hovel, and we have reason to think he is more than he seems!”

As he spoke, Cromwell advanced slowly towards the door of the room, where Sir Edward Langdale was confined, and had his hand already extended towards the ornamented lock which distinguished it as the principal guest's chamber, when Captain Lampton interposed respectfully, saying,—

“The master of the house is shut up there, Lord General.”



"Ay, and what is he called in his generation, Lampton?"

"Sir Edward Langdale, I am told," replied the officer.

"Ha! Thou knowest him not," answered Cromwell; "and yet thou hast cause, for he pummeled thy troop at Edge-hill till they knew not if there were ribs left among them. But I know him. We have met likewise. Open the door, good Lampton."

The officer obeyed, and the light streamed in, causing but a momentary movement in Sir Edward Langdale, as he lay where he had cast himself down in his clothes.

Cromwell took two strides into the room, and stood gazing at the sleeping man for several minutes. Then bending down his head he took a closer look, and raised himself again and sighed.

"It is the same," he said, "it is the same. I can trace it there in the broad, clear brow, in the calm, resolved lip. Two-and-twenty years lie upon him as lightly as snow flakes. They have been heavier upon me."

Captain Lampton heard all, but comprehended nothing. He had never seen that stern man look so gently upon any one but his daughter, and he was much surprised. As Cromwell came forth and closed the door, he merely said,—

"Show me another room, and let me be roused in three hours. I must be fifty miles hence by two to-morrow."



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### EXAMINATION OF THE PRISONERS.

**I**T was still night—dark night, and no light burned in the room where Sir Edward Langdale was confined, when the prisoner, who had slumbered long and profoundly, was awakened by some noise in the chamber. It was not loud ; but one of those slight sounds which rouse a light sleeper more readily than a louder and long continued noise.

Sir Edward listened, and thought he heard some one move, as if uneasily on a chair ; and he demanded aloud,—

“ Who is there ? ”

No one answered ; but a step approached his bedside, and a hot, feverish hand grasped his.

“ Hush ! ” said a voice he well knew ; “ speak low ! It is I, Bernard Marsh. They have thrust me in here, because all the other rooms are full. You were sleeping soundly ; and sleep, I fancy, is the best thing for you or me. We shall sleep

soundly enough, ere long. Where is Lucy? Where is Lady Langdale? Are they safe?"

"All prisoners, Bernard," said the knight, pressing his hand. "But we feared that you were killed. It will gladden poor Lucy's heart, amidst her sorrows, to find you still living. We saw you fall."

"Better for her and me, that I had died there," replied the Earl, "then one grief would have ended all; but now, what has she to go through? For me, the coming fate is light. One blow of an axe, and all is over. But for her, poor girl! there is not even that relief. Would that I had never seen her! Oh that we had never met, rather than that I should have brought all this misery upon her."

He was evidently much moved; but Sir Edward answered,—

"Fie! fie! Bernard. There be some griefs more wholesome, ay, and more dear than long hours of joy. Lucy may mourn—we must all of us mourn in this life; but the memories you leave behind, and the hopes of the future, will pour balm into her heart; and, please God, will enable her to endure. Besides," he added, "while there is life, they say, there is hope. But bad as these men are, they will not hurt women; and their greed of blood, God knows, has but too large means just now of glutting itself."

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“For me, the hope is very small,” replied the young nobleman. “As yet, they know not who I am—but the moment that is discovered my fate is sealed. As to escape, that is a vain expectation. I have a ball in my shoulder, which takes away all the activity I once possessed. I and my horse were struck together. Thank Heaven! he will never be mounted by a traitor. He served his master and his King till his last hour, and died, as I should have died, upon the battle-field.”

Several minutes of silence ensued ; and then the Earl asked abruptly,—

“How is Henry? Poor lad! he seemed badly hurt.”

“Not so, Bernard,” replied Sir Edward, rising and feeling his way towards the window, “the ball passed through his hand, and disabled it for a time ; but he is young, when wounds either of the body or the heart ought soon to heal. He seems getting well already.”

Thus saying, he took down the shutter from the window, and looked out. It was still night ; but there seemed a slight diminution of the darkness ; not exactly dawn, but that something less than twilight which precedes the harbinger of day.

“It will soon be light,” said the knight ; “thank God for it ; for the most painful part of imprisonment is the blank, rayless night.”

“It is like our fate, Sir Edward,” answered

Bernard Marsh, "all obscure and helpless. What do you intend to do when daylight comes? What is the height of that window? Could you not escape even now under cover of the night?"

Sir Edward smiled, for the Earl's words showed the first return of hope ; but he answered,—

"The window is far too high ; and even were it not so, I should not try. What, leave my dear wife and children, and you, too, in captivity? No, no, Bernard, I must wait and see. We shall soon know more. I hear them even now stirring in the neighbouring room."

"Then we shall soon hear more," said the Earl. "These people are not long in deliberation. See, it is growing grey in the east."

It was so truly. Dawn had commenced, and Bernard Marsh and Lucy's father stood at the window and watched the changes, from bluish grey to russet brown, and from brown to golden yellow.

The rise of the sun is always a beautiful thing, and I who have witnessed it more frequently, perhaps, than many men, can still appreciate that loveliness which never palls, and brings always something fresh. But when we see the morning break, with doubt and uncertainty in our own hearts, as well as in dread or sorrow, there is something even in the beauty which is melancholy, in the bright colouring which is gloomy.

“Open the window, Sir Edward,” said Bernard Marsh ; “I have been so feverish all night, that I feel as if I should be suffocated. A little fresh morning air will do me good.”

“If we could but have a surgeon to extract the ball !” said the knight ; but at the same time he opened the window with all that noise and rattle which old casements, and many new ones, produce under the process.

A soldier was instantly in the room ; and seeing Sir Edward and his fellow prisoner at the window he asked with a lowering brow,—

“What are you about ?—trying to escape ?”

“Trying to escape from suffocation in this hot room !” answered the Earl, calmly. “Look down there, my man, and tell us for what you would take that leap.”

But while the man looked out, with a grim smile at the idea, Sir Edward added,—

“Is it not possible to obtain a surgeon ? This gentleman seems badly hurt.”

“He is like to need a surgeon for his soul more than his body,” growled the man, and left the room ; but as he closed the door, they heard him say to those without, “they are asking for a surgeon.”

The reply was unheard ; but a number of voices, and a great deal of talking met the ear, over all of which, one deep, sonorous voice was from time to

time predominant. There were various sounds below the window, too ; and soldiers were seen gathering, and horses led out, several men bringing buckets of water, or leading down chargers towards the neighbouring stream to let the poor beasts drink.

At length, after the lapse of about half an hour, a sound of wailing and remonstrance was heard ; but some soldiers pushed a young, ill-looking man out upon the green ; his coat was stripped off, his handstied behind his back, and some dozen well-laid-on and tingling blows were inflicted on his shoulders with doubled stirrup leathers. He was then untied, suffered to pick up his coat, and driven through the gates in no very ceremonious manner.

All this time the same deep voice went on, in powerful but monotonous tones ; and at first the Earl and Sir Edward thought the speaker was preaching, but then came, apparently, a quick, short question, and then an answer in another voice.

For more than half an hour the same course of things proceeded ; now conversations, rapid and loud enough ; now the tones of some one holding forth ; now some little incident upon the green before the house—sufficient to call the momentary attention of the prisoners, but not to detain it long. At length the door of the chamber opened, and the same man who appeared before, put in his head, saying,—

“One called for a surgeon. Let him come forth. A surgeon is here.”

Lord Dartmoor turned from the window to follow the soldier but as he passed Sir Edward Langdale, he silently clasped his hand, with a warm, lingering pressure which seemed to say,—

“It may be the last.”

When he entered the great dining-hall adjoining, he found it much more thinly tenanted than he expected. There was sitting at the end of the large table that stern hard-featured soldier who had arrived in the middle of the night. He wore his hat, and was making some notes on a long strip of paper, while before him stood, bareheaded, but not tied, young Henry Langdale, with his right hand and arm supported by a hastily made sling. Standing a little further down the hall, wrapped in a horseman's long, loose coat, was no other than the monk whom the Earl had found at the house of his good cousin, Lady Janet; but the sight of him caused no surprise, as Bernard at that moment imagined he had been taken with the rest of the party. At each door there were two musketeers.

Taking advantage of the single moment, when Cromwell's head was bent over the paper on which he was writing, Lord Dartmoor made a sign to Henry not to recognize him, and passed close by his side without a word or a second glance,



Cromwell looked up, ran his eye over the form of the cavalier from head to foot, and then turned to Henry again, resuming an examination which seemed to have commenced before.

"Verily, thou art bold, boy," he said, "to own that thou wert at Worcester and did'st thy best—it was but little, I wot—to frustrate God's crowning mercy to this poor army of England."

"What was the use of denying it, Sir?" said Henry Langdale.

"That is true, too," answered Cromwell. "I see thou tellest the truth, and that is something in these days, when the father of lies is busy about the land—especially in the camp and resort of the cavaliers."

Henry bit his lip and coloured a good deal; but Cromwell went on saying,—

"Yet thou art a mere boy, and hast not beard enough to dull the edge of the axe. Where wert thou born?"

"In France," answered the lad; and then with a more rapid combination of ideas, and a just appreciation of the circumstances than might have been expected, he added, "many years ago my father aided the poor Protestants of Rochelle, and settled in France. There was I born."

"Ha!" said the General. "Ha! and who is or was thy father?"

Henry Langdale's cheek turned pale; but he

felt that to attempt concealment was vain, and he answered boldly, and with a look of pride,—

“Sir Edward Langdale, of Buckley, a true Christian, and a good soldier.”

Cromwell for a minute or two uttered not a word ; but sat and gazed at the youth in silence, without a shade crossing his countenance which could afford any indication of the affection of his mind. At length he said,—

“Where is thy father?”

“Nay, I know not,” replied Henry ; “he was here last night, and fell into the hands of your men.”

“He is in there, my Lord General,” said the man who stood by ; and Cromwell instantly turned his face towards the Earl.

“And who art thou?” asked the great usurper, seemingly taking no note of what the soldier had said. “Thy face comes upon me as something I have seen in a dream. Nay, answer not. Let me try if I can unravel the tangled skein that events weave with events through a long and troublesome life till, at first sight, all seems knots and intricacies. We employ labour and skill to untwist the threads—often in vain—but then we grow impatient and we cut them. Did I ever see thee before?”

“I cannot tell,” said Lord Dartmoor, “but if so, not near enough to know me. Had we been so

near, it were unlikely that you and I had met here to-day."

"Even so?" said Cromwell, "thou art then, one of those rash and heedless men who carry private passion into public contests, who see in the open adversary, the individual foe, and become assassins rather than soldiers."

"Not so," exclaimed Lord Dartmoor, interrupting him, "so heaven help me! as I looked upon you—as I look upon you now, but as the public enemy, and would have slain you as a duty, long ere this, had heaven given me the opportunity of doing so, openly, man to man. But had we met, where I had you at disadvantage, though your death had saved the Kingdom, I would have spared you."

"Even as David spared Saul in the cave of Engedi," said Cromwell, with somewhat of a sneer in his tone; "but I am in David's place now, and thou in Saul's. The case being somewhat reversed maketh a great difference, young man. It is for me to spare or not, as God gives me judgment. What is thy name? Answer quickly."

"My name is Bernard Marsh, Earl of Dartmoor," answered the young nobleman at once. "I am not ashamed of that name, nor afraid to own it, even in these bonds."

"The Earl of Dartmoor!" cried Cromwell, half starting up and then reseating himself. "So

young ! so fair ! and yet so terrible a disturber of the peace of England. Where are thy wounds, thy scars, the marks of thy many battles ? Where Newbury, Edge-hill, and Marston Moor ? Thine, like mine, has been a life of battles, but I am worn and weary with the strife—thou art a boy. Where are the marks of all thou hast done, I say ?”

He elevated his voice, as he asked the last question, and spoke with vehement rapidity.

“ Here !” said the Earl, laying his hand upon his heart, and then, in a calmer voice, he added, “ General Cromwell, it is vain for us to bandy words. Did great success afford any true indication of God’s approval, you are right, and I am wrong ; yet of one thing be sure, that if you have acted conscientiously, and believed that all you did was for His good service who made us both, and that the little power He grants to mortal men was employed to do His will, believe at least this that such was also the case with me, and that with the lights which I possess, were the same to come over again, and with the same results, I would act as I have done.”

“ Well spoken !” answered Cromwell, with an inclination of his head, “ and perchance true. Yet thou must die, young man. For the peace of this Commonwealth, thou must die.”

“ So be it !” said the Earl.

"Yet I would not," continued the Lord General, "that men should say, I took a wounded man and refused him a surgeon's aid. That man, there, who was brought in this morning, boasts of some leech's skill, and seems to have treated yonder boy's hand with discretion. He will attend to thy wounds. Look to him, sirrah, and give him what relief you can.

"Let that young man go," he continued, speaking to the soldier near: "he is but a boy, and has committed a boy's error. They say his mother and sister are here. Let them go, too, whither they will. He can go with them. We do not make war on women and boys."

The soldier, who seemed much in his confidence, spoke a word in his ear. "True!" said the Lord General, "mighty true. It is a point of policy, when we find a pile of vipers' eggs on a dunghill to crush the reptiles in the egg—if the mixen be not too large; but if it be, we waste our time, good Everard. England is large, man; and, if we went over it all, trampling on the young of the snake, we should never have done. Besides, we should take upon us what Heaven reserves for itself. Some may prove harmless, some be eaten up by the fowls of the air, some be crushed by the feet of passers by, few grow to maturity. Let them go, I say; but first take this youth's word that he never bears arms against the Common-

wealth of England again. You may take his word. No need to swear him. These men keep their words—'tis a virtue, though a solitary one. No words! begone."

Cromwell bent his head over the table, and for some minutes seemed lost in thought. He saw, indeed, much that was passing before him. He beheld the Earl of Dartmoor seat himself calmly in a chair and bare his shoulder, while the monk, with somewhat rude instruments of surgery, proceeded to the painful operation of extracting the ball from the shoulder, sometimes bending over him and speaking a word or two in his ear, sometimes devoting himself entirely to his task. The General marked not with any great attention, but he did see and notice that the young nobleman sat unheld and firm, while the other probed the wound and searched for the ball, and then drew forth the bullet with what seemed a painful wrench. He marked, too, that there was no resistance, no motion of the limbs, though a slight shudder of the flesh of the arm showed that the patient suffered.

"A dangerous man!" thought Cromwell; "but a brave!" Then, turning to the soldier, he said, "Bring forth the other prisoner. He is the last, I think. Stay. Order my horse, and tell the officer commanding, that we march in an hour. Verily the poor beasts must eat, ay, and the men, too,

must partake of those creature comforts which have been vouchsafed to restore our strength after the heavy labour which is sometimes needful to obtain His blessings who willed at the first that we should eat bread by the sweat of our brow. We ourselves, though no sickly girl, to fear some small fatigue, are not so lithe and enduring of limb as we were in days of yore. But, talking of girls, see that the young man whom we have just dismissed, have his horse restored; likewise the women's horses, and let them ride forth with all the other men—those who have passed before us, I would say—the common men. Make no mistake. The youth, and the women, and serving folk. Let them to horse quickly and begone, and take their way towards St. Neots, with good safe-conducts. They can rest there for a day, and then pass the sea. We remember that St. Neots well. They brew not good beer there, but they drink it, brewed elsewhere. Thou understandest. Begone; let there be no mistakes."





## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE LORD GENERAL'S GRATITUDE.

**T**O those who are not well accustomed to the manner of speech usual with the great usurper, the directions given on the present occasion, might have seemed somewhat confused ; but the man who stood by his side had served him long, and though armed as a soldier, and, to say sooth, no bad fighting man in the battle-field, had been originally what was then called "the body servant" of the great general. Long accustomed to divine his master's meaning amidst his cloud of words, he needed not to wait for the brief short sentence, which, like a flash of lightning from a cloud, usually in the end gave light to all that was obscure before in Cromwell's speeches ; and in truth, he very often fathomed his disposition and intentions before the dark and abstract sayings, in which things were usually at first involved, were



half concluded. He only paused one moment then, not clearly comprehending one of the orders he had received, whether to bring forth Sir Edward Langdale or not ; but then he advanced to the door of the room where the knight was confined, unlocked it and threw it open, saying, "You can come forth."

With a slow step, Sir Edward entered the lower hall—his own family hall ; but the sight of the guards at each door showed him that he was still a prisoner. He saw, too, Bernard Marsh, his well-loved friend, still under the surgeon's hand, and he saw the great but ruthless victor, the subvertor of all the institutions he had been taught to venerate, the destroyer of his friends, the murderer, as he thought, of his king, seated in the chair where he had so often sat, ready to deal the word of life or death to all around him. But Edward Langdale was still the same who in former years had encountered Richelieu, more accessible, but not less scrupulous, and as powerful, and his confidence and his presence of mind did not leave him.

With a calm, slow step, he advanced direct towards the end of the table, and seated himself on a chair directly opposite to Cromwell, who, for his part, remained gazing down upon the strip of paper before him, and scrawling upon it some characters in a large, straggling hand.

Neither spoke for several minutes, and before

he addressed the prisoner, Cromwell muttered to himself, "No, it cannot be! God does not require too much." Then, raising his eyes, he asked, "Who art thou?"

"The owner of this house," replied the knight, "my name is Edward Langdale."

"A bitter malignant," said Cromwell. "Art thou not the son of that Sir Richard Langdale, a brave man but a great fool, who died in one of those ungodly quarrels with a neighbour in which you and yours delight."

"I am the son—the second son—of that gentleman of whom you speak," replied the other, weighing each word.

"Was he not a prelatist, and a persecutor of those who humbly opined they could serve God according to their own lights, without aid from a farthing candle of the bishops?" asked the General, who was apparently waxing warm in his own peculiar tenets.

But the answer of the prisoner cooled him. "I am not responsible for my father's conduct," he said, "and, in truth, know little of it; for I was young when he died. But I know enough to say, no! to your question, sir. This I do know, he was a friend of the good Prince of Soubise, the defender of the Protestant faith in France, and a zealous advocate of liberty of conscience in all men."

"That is well," answered Cromwell, "but speak

of thyself. Wast thou not the pupil of that Doctor Winthorne who was a rector somewhere near, some twenty-five years ago—a horse-riding, fowling, hunting parson of the old times, before new lights had broken upon this then benighted land?"

Sir Edward's cheek turned somewhat red, but he answered calmly: "I was pupil of that excellent Doctor Winthorne who never fowled or hunted, and who refused the Bishopric of Ely because he thought he could do good where he was, and he did it. But, General Cromwell, it is in vain to turn back to my young days. I am here your prisoner, and avow myself one of that party who have held fast their loyalty, and the faith they received from their ancestors. I have been your adversary, I have shed my blood against you; but I defy you or any other man to say I have ever abused a moment of success, or that I have ever persecuted or abused an opponent who fell into my power. You will act what part you will towards me. I have acted mine well towards you and yours."

"I have heard so much of you," answered Cromwell gravely, "but my questions are not so vain as you think, sir. Good services to God, and God's cause, sometimes caused many errors, by showing, you will understand, that those errors were faults of the understanding, not of the spirit or the will.

Are you that Edward Langdale who, when a mere youth, went to screen and comfort the poor people of Rochelle and succeeded in delivering some of them?"

"I am, I suppose, the person you speak of," replied the knight, "I went to Rochelle in the time of the siege and did what I could."

"Strange!" said the general, "that thou shouldst now be the oppressor of men's consciences in this poor land. Have we ever met before?"

"Many a time," said Sir Edward Langdale, "but never so near as now—never so near that I could see your face or you mine."

"You are mistaken," said Cromwell, evidently moved by some strong and strange emotion—"you are much mistaken. I have seen your face before and you mine, though both are changed. Can I look from that window and see yonder trees and leaves, that river flowing calmly on, and yet forget? Can I behold that moving sky and those bright floating clouds, and feel the soft breathing of my native air, and not remember? Oh that the days of joy would return and blot out all the other memories between the now and the then! Yet you, who have fewer years and fewer events to recollect, can forget. Do you not remember the stream which ran gently by Applethorpe, like a good man's life, and the old trees and the glades through which it passed, and the speckled trout,

and the early morning's stroll? Edward Langdale, Edward Langdale, you have saved my life, and I cannot doom you to death—no, not for the commonwealth of England. The memories of the sweetest years of all my life, step in and hold my hand. True, my heart was not regenerate then, but it was young and soft, and many a time, at moments far apart, I have thought of the day and the plunge in the gurgling water and your helping hand, and I have felt a strange sort of remorse in my own conscience that I did not even thank you for the life you had saved at the peril of your own, but went away and left you to think that I had no gratitude. Do you remember now?"

"Oh yes, right well," answered the knight, "but you are much changed, sir, and I cannot recall your features."

"Changed!" exclaimed Cromwell, "have I not had enough to change me? Have not I seen sorrow and strife, and felt things that burn the heart to tinder and scorch the very brain? But those days I never forget, for the only thing which could blot them out would be days as sweet! and they will never come."

"Alas! sir," answered Sir Edward, "the only thing which can ever give back the feelings of youth to our latter years, is the doing of good and kindly deeds. We must make our heart like a youth's, if we would feel a youth's freshness."

‘Freshness! man,” cried Cromwell, “where s all I find freshness? The lot has fallen to me in stony places, and though I stand upon a mountain top, I was happier at the foot of the hill. The ground around me is all barren. This is the only day, for many a year, when the scent of other times has come back in all its freshness to my nostrils. You have fought against me—you have thwarted me in many a thing—nay, I well nigh think, you have fought against God. But you shall not die. You shall go free. Your children and your wife are free already, gone to St. Neots, and there you may also join them.”

The last words were spoken just as the soldier whom he had sent below re-entered the room, and with that familiarity of remonstrance which Cromwell is known to have tolerated, the man exclaimed, “Nay, verily, my Lord General, this man is an old and perverse malignant. He has sinned against Israel, and led many more to sin. Let him die the death!”

Cromwell’s manner changed instantly.

“What!” he exclaimed sternly, “is it because the Lord has given the crowning mercy of Worcester field, that such as thou shouldst think they have deeper thoughts than the chosen servants. What says the book? Of a truth, it speaketh to thee, Oldborough, and all like thee. Does it not say: ‘Why do you harden your hearts, as Egypt

and Pharaoh hardened their hearts ?' Did not he, after he was struck, let them go, and they departed ; and thou, too, shalt go, Edward Langdale, and shalt depart out of this land, because thou didst peril thy life to comfort our poor brethren of Rochelle ; and hast done many an act well pleasing to the Lord, and for his service ; wert thou tenfold a malignant, thou shalt go ; but thou shalt give the parole of thine honour that thou wilt not raise thy hand against this commonwealth again. Leave me Oldborough. Thou hast been indiscreet ; but thou art an old and faithful servant of the Lord and of his poor creatures."

"I meant not to offend," said the man somewhat sullenly, and left the room.

"See you here, now," said Cromwell, in a freer tone, "how many there be to say, slay, when I say, spare ; and yet, perchance, men will hereafter call me a man of blood, when it is a hard thing for me to resist the voice of all those who, under the will of God, have raised me to the supreme command of this poor army. But hearken to me, Edward Langdale. Hasten to St. Neots, and join your wife and children. Take ship at Lynn, and cross the seas as soon as may be. You have no ties here now."

"Your pardon, Lord General," replied the knight, "I have as dear as wife or child."

"Your brother ?" said Cromwell, "I forgot until

but now, you were the second son. Where is he? He has taken no part in these strifes. I have never heard his name mixed up therewith. Where is he?"

A voice from the other side of the room said, "Here!" and the monk walked calmly forward and held out his arms to Sir Edward Langdale.

"Let me hold you for ever to my heart, Edward," he said. "I have come here to do you justice, for through long, long years I did you wrong. I have wept and repented, but not enough. I come to give you back your own. I come to ask your forgiveness before I die."

Edward gladly took him in his arms, saying,—  
"Welcome! welcome! Richard. This is indeed a blessed change;" and the two strong men wept.







## CHAPTER XXX.

### THOU HAST TO DIE.

“**H**OLD,” cried Cromwell, after having afforded a brief opportunity for the expression of feelings which he saw were strong and natural, though he did not clearly understand the sorrows whence they came. “Hold, we have no time to waste on foolery or on soft things that link not themselves with public duties. Edward Langdale, who is this man?”

“My dear brother,” answered the knight; “Sir Richard Langdale.”

“No,” cried the monk vehemently, “I am not Sir Richard Langdale—I never was. In two or three sentences all is easily explained. My mother was never his father’s lawful wife. Mark me for one moment, Lord General,” and as he spoke he walked slowly but calmly up to Cromwell’s side, and leaned upon the table close to him. “I a

poor man—ambition seized upon me. I added to some papers, fabricated others, and claimed and obtained an inheritance which was not mine. He maintained his own rights, thwarted me as regards this estate of Buckley, and won the hate of him who was at heart inclined to love him. Thou knowest what it is to feel humbled and debased in the presence of one to whom we are doing wrong.”

Cromwell started and turned sharply round; but the other went on without observing the emotion his words had produced. “We met once, after we had not seen each other for years. He gave me hard words, and I stabbed him—him, unresisting, and with his bosom open to my sword. I thought I had killed him, and had added the crime of Cain to the evil passion of Cain. I have passed my life in penitence ever since, and finding not long ago that God had spared me the crime which I had thought committed, I have come over here to relinquish to him the inheritance I had usurped, and to make all those declarations and admissions which will establish his rights and may atone for my offences. This is all I have to say, Sir General; but now thou canst understand clearly who I am, and why I am here.”

“Not altogether,” answered Cromwell; “but this is no time to examine these things scrupulously. We must not waste the few moments granted us for important action in this life. There

is no charge against thee: thou art free to come and go. Thy brother is free also; but he is an exile from this land. Yet, as an excess of favour for deeds he has done in other days, which truly have a sweet savour before the Lord and his poor servants, we will allow him in his safe conduct to come and go, to settle all his affairs with thee and others, and to transport himself beyond the four seas. But what means he when he says, he leaves those behind him who are as dear to him as his wife, who is free, or his children, who are free? You, he cannot mean, for he knew not it seems, that you were in the land."

"He means that young man," said the monk, pointing to Lord Dartmoor, "one worthy of all his love, which I have never been. He linked himself to him by love and kindly actions; I severed myself from him by enmity and wrong. As in heaven so on earth, verily we both have our reward. Shall God be merciful and man be obdurate? Shall thy heart be as hard as the nether millstone, while his is as soft as the honey of the mountain? Is there not enough wailing in this land already, but thou must add another cry of sorrow to the voice of complaint that is raising up against thee?"

Cromwell sat and listened, looking down heavily as if he hardly heard the words addressed to him; but at length as the monk paused, he answered

sternly: "Who gave thee licence to hold forth? Thou standest thyself in peril, and shall thy voice prevail for others? Man, man, if my eyes be not blinded and my ears stopped, thou art of the herd of Belial, one of the worshippers of the beast, perchance a priest of the false prophet. And shalt thou school the Elect? shalt thou pretend to reveal the secrets of the highest to his saints and his chosen servants—those who have been hired, it may be at the first hour, it may be at the eleventh; but who have toiled in his vineyard till their garments are red with the juice of the winepress, and who have had an earnest of their wages with battles of shakings and bellyfuls of dry blows. Shall we spare when the Lord says, strike! or shall we take our hand from the plough when the first furrow is hardly turned? or dost thou think to deceive me? Are not all thy crew skilful in arts which save the body and condemn the soul? by witchcraft, and charming, and what not? and now that thou hast dressed this youth's arm, and given, it would seem, temporal—that is to say, corporeal ease—thou wouldst have him given over to thee, and there to make him ten times more a child of hell than thyself. Well, I wot thou art mistaken. We will deal otherwise with him. As for thyself, thou mayest go, for we have said it. As for the lad, he must die, for have we not said that, too? His offences are budded and full blown—verily,

the fruit, such as it is, is mature, verily too ripe, and ready to drop from the bough ; but death is, in one sense, like the blossom of the hop, somewhat bitter perchance, but often salutary amidst the sweet compounds of this world. Young man, thou hast to die."

"When?" demanded the Earl of Dartmoor, without moving a muscle, and before Sir Edward Langdale could interpose.

"That must rest with those into whose hands I shall give thee," replied Cromwell darkly. "They are not slothful in this work, I trow—Edward Langdale, urge me not! If thou holdest the life I have given thee as a boon, be silent."

"Take it when thou wilt, General Cromwell," replied Sir Edward. "He and I can die together as we have fought together, and lived so long together. I will not accept my life at the expense of my daughter's promised husband."

"It is not at my expense, noble friend," replied the Earl. "I have fought against this man and his cause from my very boyhood. I do not say that I deserve death from him or any man, for I have done but what I thought my duty, and have never refused mercy to any one who asked it ; but if I have deserved death from any one, it has been from him."

"Ha! sayest thou?" said Cromwell gravely, without in the least relaxing his stern look.

"There is but one favour, Lord General, that I will ask," continued the Earl, "and that is to be promised one interview before I die with my friend's daughter, my affianced wife. I ask it not for my own sake, but for hers. I am ready to die this instant, but I know that in years to come it will be a comfort to her to think, that she saw me before I died."

"'Tis well," said Cromwell, "'tis easy. I said not that thou shouldst die at once. The young woman was in the house but now. She may be so still. At all events, thou shalt have full time to bid her farewell."

"That in itself is a mercy ; and I thank you, Sir," replied the Earl.

Cromwell bowed his head ; but he was in no degree moved. Men, it seems to me, have much mistaken the character of that great and perhaps inscrutable man. Though certainly not inaccessible to human feeling, it seems to me that he almost always acted upon profound conviction. He might be moved, he might be touched by those terrible positions in which his enemies were often placed ; but he never suffered the feelings of the heart, in which he was not wanting, to interfere with designs formed upon far wider views. Cromwell was deeply affected, we are told, by the interview between Charles I. and his children, but it disturbed not his purposes—it shook not his

resolution in the least. He marched on to the great catastrophe, as firmly as if there had not been a pebble in his path. As far as I have read, and been able to understand his history—a task more difficult than ordinary readers may believe,—the two parts in that extraordinary man's nature were separated by a barrier, almost impossible to be passed. The kindly sympathies of which he was by no means destitute; and the steadfast purpose which carried all his actions to their conclusions, were things separate and apart in his nature, and to the latter all else was subservient. At times, indeed, a certain degree of softness would come over him: there are recorded instances of his being sportive and even mild, and it is probable, that at those moments, he was willing to spare and show generosity and even kindness—else how is it that we find individual instances of levity at moments of apparently very indiscriminate vengeance? And in those instances we find that there was no great object to be obtained by sternness. There must be inconsistencies in all characters; but I am inclined to believe, that there were fewer in the character of Cromwell than is generally imagined.

After a short pause, during which the General seemed considering something deliberately, sitting with his eyes averted from the prisoner, but fixed upon the table, he wrote two or three words upon

the scrap of paper before him, tore them off, and beckoning one of the soldiers from the door, gave them to the man with a brief command in a low voice. Then turning to Bernard Marsh, he said,—“Answer me one or two questions—if thou wilt. I say if thou wilt, advisedly ; for undoubtedly this land has had enough of thee, and thy answer can make no change.”

“I see not, General Cromwell, why I should reply at all,” replied the Earl, with a slight smile, but without the least want of courtesy in his manner ; “yet, as you have granted the only request I have to make, it were uncivil to refuse in return a few minutes of the few I probably have to live to answer your inquiries.”

“Do not suppose,” rejoined Cromwell, “that I purpose to deal with thy case in so summary a manner. I say not that the power of life or death is not, as it were, in my hands ; for I have but to order a court-martial on the green, and these poor men without, being greatly incensed, and ready to smite the Philistines hip and thigh—ay, many somewhat too ready—would, as is their bounden duty, of which truly they are well aware, find thee guilty, and execute thy sentence in the court-yard, or elsewhere more convenient ; and verily, no law would be broken, nor any thing unseemly done, for this land is under the law called martial, which for the time (may its rigour soon be removed) super-



sedes all other laws ; but there is no need just now of any such haste, for the will of the Lord has been done, and his crowning mercy vouchsafed at Worcester field. We have but to take care now that the land shall be no more troubled by our own weakness in sparing those whom he has delivered to our bow and spear ; and, by him that made me—there shall be no such backsliding in me. Have I not gone forward to this very hour, without turning for a moment from the path set before me ? What should I say ? It was for this I saidst thou must die, but I meant not that thou shouldst not have lawful and well considered trial ; but to deal freely with thee, young man, I judge that those who will judge thee are not likely—that is to say are very sure not—to let one malignant head stand where it is, unless I interpose either before or after, which in thy case, verily, I will not do.”

“ All this is very likely,” said the Earl, who had little taste for the Lord General’s long and seemingly confused orations. “ But you mentioned some questions, sir. Pray remember that whether my time be long or short, I have enough to fill it somewhat sadly in my heart and brain.”

“ Truly thou hast, if thou employest the moments well,” answered Cromwell. “ As to the questions, I would ask if thou art not the brother of that Duke of —— to whom we showed some favour in years

gone, and though unwise in some things, showed himself faithful to his master unto the very last."

"I am the same," replied Lord Dartmoor, "a soldier from my boyhood, and brought up by that good brother in the same faithfulness to the same master."

"In that he was wrong," said Cromwell; "for verily he has led thee unto death. Thou art very wrong. Thou claimest also to be a peer; and though all such vanities have to be done away, nevertheless, certain regards, which it would be inconvenient to neglect, have made us tolerate things otherwise idle. Thou art a peer, I think."

The Earl bowed his head, and Cromwell went on saying: "Now answer; but not without consideration. In this we may show some favour. Wilt thou stand upon thy privilege and be tried as a Peer? or wilt thou go before those who judge the common soldiers?"

"What matters it," said Lord Dartmoor, with an indifferent air. "I see not much to choose."

"The great men will have the block. The others will be shot!" said the great usurper briefly and sharply.

"Well then, I will choose the soldiers' death," replied the Earl. "I have faced so many bullets, I may as well face them now again."

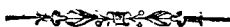
The words were hardly spoken which sealed his fate, when the door on the right hand of Cromwell,

as he sat in the hall, opened suddenly, and the form of Lucy Langdale appeared. It would seem that no one had told her why she was brought there. Her face was very pale, but there was no other sign of fear about her ; and her eye ran hastily over the various little groups, till at length it rested upon Bernard Marsh. Then in a moment, she sprang forward, and cast herself upon his bosom exclaiming, "Living! living! Oh my love, oh my husband!" and she burst into a passionate flood of tears.

Cromwell did not behold the scene unmoved—perhaps he felt it more than pleased him—for, rising from his seat, he advanced to Lucy's side and calmly putting her father's arm around her, he said, "Take her away, Edward Langdale, and comfort her."

"What so soon!" cried Sir Edward and Bernard both together, and Lucy stretched forth her hand, with a look of mute despair.

"Thou shalt see him again," said Cromwell, in a really gentle tone, "young lady, thou shalt see him again. There are too many here. But a day or two hence, thou shalt see him again, where you can pour forth your thoughts to each other more conveniently ; and with a firm but not unkindly grasp he led her towards the door.





## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE ESCAPE.

**I**T was in a dark narrow street in the eastern part of the city of London. The fine weather with which the month of September had commenced, was gone. Mist and rain had succeeded, and the sad equinox was howling as if in angry sorrow at the departure of summer. Oh, those old streets of London! how melancholy they looked in those days, when hardly a globe lamp at the corner of a cross-street threw a dim and dusky light across the muddy pathway. They, too, were but a recent invention, and the solitary lantern borne by an old female domestic before the thrifty master, or half a dozen torches before some gay reveller, were still to be met after the sun had set, and the watch patrolled the streets, or slept in the sentry boxes, as they did in the reign of Queen Elizabeth or that of George the Third. It was a cold, wet, miserable night, when the whole aspect

of the outside world was gloom ; and it needed the glowing fire, the cheering glass, or that warmer blessing—a happy heart, to give even the look of cheerfulness to the interior of man's dwelling. But in the room in that narrow back street to which the reader must now follow, there was little to enliven or even to relieve. There was no fire in the grate, a solitary candle on the table, and no sign of any repast. The wind shook the casements, the dingy wainscoting creaked and rattled, and the sad chorus kept up by the wind, seemed like a thousand plaintive voices wanting to tell some sorrow.

By a small deal table in the middle of that gloomy room, stood Sir Edward Langdale and his daughter Lucy. They were apparently waiting and listening ; and they had to wait and listen long, for not less than ten minutes passed before any sound was heard, except the whistling and screaming of the wind, and the creaking of the woodwork. At length, however, the heavy hammer at the door struck with a quick, short knock, and Sir Edward ran out and admitted a tall, strong man, with beard closely shaved, and locks cut short. He was dressed in a suit of dark grey cloth, with a long iron-hilted rapier by his side, and carried in his hand one of those steeple crowned hats which distinguished the strictest sect of Presbyterians in that day. Few, indeed, to behold him, would have thought him the same bold Serjeant Loftus whom

we have seen before with Bernard Marsh at the bloody skirmish of Goose Green. It was the same man, however; and on perceiving Sir Edward Langdale and Lucy, he gave a large coarse sheet of paper into the hands of the latter, saying "There, Mamselle; I have been so long in coming back, because the General was holding forth to the soldiers in the guard-room. He called it a bit of comfortable doctrine, but to me it was uncomfortable enough, for I was forced to stand there by my good cousin Joel, and hum and keep my countenance; though I thought every moment I should have laughed; and I should, too, if it had not been thinking of my Lord, and that made me grave enough."

Sir Edward looked over Lucy's shoulder, and saw that it was an order under the hand of Oliver Cromwell himself, to admit one Lucy Langdale to the cell of the prisoner called Bernard Marsh, in the prison of the Commonwealth called Newgate, to confer with the said prisoner for the space of one hour.

"But is it true, Loftus," asked Sir Edward, "that the sentence is really pronounced? It was said that some cases had been adjourned."

"Lord bless you, sir!" answered the man, "they made no distinctions. It was all done at one sweep. It was, that every man taken in arms against the Commonwealth, at or after the battle of Worces.

ter, were to be banished to the colonies of America, and sold to the planters there, to defray the expenses of the journey. That was the sense of it, though I have not got the words quite right, for there was a heap more about mercy, and all that, which my cousin Joel read to me, but I cannot remember. Mercy! I dare say. To talk of mercy, when they are sending a noble earl like that to be sold for a slave. But still, you know, Mamselle, if they had not sent him there, they would cut his head off, and while there is life there is hope, the people say."

There was something more consolatory in the man's rough words than could have been found in a studied oration; and Lucy said, turning to Sir Edward, "Let us go, my father. I may tell him, is it not so?" she added, with some hesitation, as if she half feared her request would be denied, "that I will join him in the colonies—that I have your consent?"

"Ay!" replied Sir Edward, warmly, "that you have my command, and that we will find means to buy his liberty, if it cost us the last crown in our purses, or the last acre of our lands."

"Then let us go," said Lucy, "dear father, I am firmer now. Have no fear of your child, I was but overcome by the suddenness of our disasters; and time and thought brought back calmness. The very hope of seeing him gives me strength,"

"The hope! Nay, the certainty, I trust," said Sir Edward, with a start. "Sergeant, who gave you this paper. Are you sure it is genuine?"

"The Lord General himself, as they call him," answered Loftus, "my cousin told him that I was blessed with new lights—tallow-candles in brass sconces—and that I was willing to serve his excellency: he did not add, to six feet of hemp and a fall—but that I came to obtain a promise he had made to a young lady, in whose service I had been brought up, to let her see her lover, the Earl of Dartmoor. Your pardon Mamselle; and then, he started and said, he had forgotten, and called for paper, and wrote the order. He gave it to me and said, 'bring it quickly, though in truth, it matters not;' and a strange look came upon his face as if he would have laughed, and he added, 'get you gone, or your lady may be too late'—and looking at all the soldiers round, he began to talk about faith and grace, and this poor land, and this poor simple people who had been misled."

"Let us go, my father: let us go," said Lucy, eagerly; "he said, we might be too late. It is strange he should have forgotten, when he promised so strictly."

"He does not easily forget," replied Sir Edward Langdale. "I can only think the ship is to sail during the night. But let us go. Put this great cloak round you. As far as the outer wards,



doubtless, they will let me go with you ; but then you will have to go on alone. Is your heart firm, my girl ? ”

“ As a rock,” replied Lucy ; and covering herself with the large cloak provided for her, she walked stoutly towards the door of the house, while her father, calling to some one within to take care of the light, followed her out into the street.

Sergeant Loftus went before with a lantern, but the moment Lucy issued forth into the narrow street, the wind and the rain struck her, making her recoil, and almost taking away her breath. But still she advanced again, taking her father's arm, and with that constancy which is the peculiar gift of woman, buffeting with the storm, undismayed by the rude blast, and the dark and gloomy abyss into which she plunged.

The streets were well nigh deserted, though one poor creature—a wretched woman, in a tattered cloak, begged of them at a corner, and received a small piece of money, for which she prayed God speed them. There is as much misery under a commonwealth as under a despotism, and perhaps it is more general. On, on they went, through narrow lanes and crooked passages—for London was not then the London of the present day—sometimes losing their way and having to turn back, but finding it in the end, while Lucy struggled on without a murmur, till at length they stood

opposite a heavy building, very much unlike the "Newgate" of the present times.

Far advanced into the street was a strong fortified gate, probably the barbican of one of the entrances into the city, and there were soldiers at the door ; but no opposition was made to the proceedings of the party till they had reached an iron gate leading into the inner court. There they were stopped by some stout rough men, who demanded to see their pass ; but who, on seeing the writing of the Lord General, told them to go on, and opened the wicket. Some thirty or forty yards farther, as they passed along a plastered and somewhat dilapidated passage, another iron gate presented itself, with a large lantern burning behind, and two men smoking pipes and seemingly half asleep.

Here, however, the examination was more strict and some difficulty was made to the admission of Sir Edward Langdale and Sergeant Loftus farther into the interior of the building. Lucy hardly heard what was said, for her mind was so completely filled with the thoughts of the interview that was approaching, that she could hardly admit anything else into the council chamber of the brain. She had a faint impression, however, that some one said, "It is my daughter and my servant," and that some money was given, and that she recovered greatly when she was again hurried forward,

and another heavily-studded iron door presented itself.

There a man, almost gigantic, with a large key in his hand appeared, and read the pass with great care. He grumbled something about the number of prisoners, and the quantity of passes, and his reverence for the Lord General; but ending by unlocking the door, and telling Lucy to go straight forward till she saw a warder. "He will show you the cell," he said, "it is one apart, by superior authority. Marry, he is greatly favoured, when we have sometimes five in a room not bigger than a baker's oven. You two stay here," he continued "the pass is for the girl alone."

No remonstrances or persuasions had any effect, and opposing his burly person in the aperture of the half-open door, he led Sir Edward and Loftus back, while he suffered Lucy to pass in, and called to a warder who was creeping along at the other end of the passage with a lantern in his hand, bidding him admit the "young woman" to cell forty-four, under a pass from the Lord General.

The warder's lantern was the only light in the corridor, if it could be called so, and a dim obscurity reigned within, but there were several persons passing about, and one of them, in hurrying by, ran rudely against the poor girl, who had hardly strength to stand. She recoiled against the wall at the side, and was only conscious that something

which felt like a paper, had been put into her hand, when the warder called her roughly to come on, and in a moment or two after opened a door upon the right, saying aloud, "A young woman to see you, Master !" and held up the light to let her find her way in.

The lantern, though dim enough, sent its dusky rays all round the little cell, as Lucy, with shaking limbs and beating heart, approached the door. Her eyes ran gently round from side to side, but there was no one there, and instantly concluding that they had removed him for ever from the shores of England, ere she could see him again, she uttered a shrill, almost despairing cry, and fell upon the ground.

The crowded state of the prison, the number of persons who were in the passages, the faintness of the light, and the sudden rush forward of Sir Edward Langdale, as soon as he heard his daughter's voice, together with the short, useless struggle of the turnkey to keep him back, and the hurrying up of several warders and a soldier, to see what was the matter, produced, for several minutes, a scene seldom beheld within those gloomy walls. Sorrow and despair, and agony they witnessed often enough ; but those commonly marched on with the slow tread of tragedy, without haste or bustle ; but now everything was confusion. The large doors at each end of the

passage were closed ; and, while Sir Edward Langdale held his child in his arms and questioned her eagerly, the empty cell was strictly examined but in vain.

For a short time Lucy did not, for she could not, answer ; but at length, she said, " Oh, my father, they have sent him into banishment without letting me see him as it was promised. It was cruel of the Lord General so to deceive me."

" No, young woman," said the warder, who had just come forth from the cell. " He is not there, sure enough ; but he has not been sent away. Here comes the governor, however, and he will soon tell whether you have not had some hand in this yourself." The investigation which followed, however, led to no results. At first the head gaoler, or Lieutenant-Governor (a rank which, I believe, he bore), threatened, blustered, and spoke high ; but the safe conduct and pardon under Cromwell's own hand and seal, which Sir Edward Langdale carried, and the pass given to Lucy that very night, with the Lord General's undoubted injunction, soon removed any suspicion which had at first fallen upon them. The soldiers and turnkeys defended themselves as best they could, asserting earnestly that no one had passed since they came on duty two hours before, but some of the officers of the prison, and gradually the chief, seemed to change their views, and to con-

clude that instead of denouncing all and every body to the Lord General, as they had at first menaced, it would be as well to say as little upon the subject beyond the prison walls as possible. "Amongst such a number of captives as we have got here," said the Governor, "some must contrive to get away. Why Mostyn and Middleton escaped from the Tower, where there were only five or six, while here we count by thousands. One out of such a number will probably not be missed, and if he be, I must make the money good."

Sir Edward Langdale would not even betray, by a smile, a happy suspicion that crossed his mind, but drew Lucy's arm through his, and asked the officer if they would be permitted to depart. No opposition was made, and only a hint added, in a low tone, that it would be better to keep silence upon all that had occurred that night. "The sooner you go out of the country, I should judge, the better," said the officer, "your safe conduct has not long to run." Sir Edward made no reply, but passed on, and soon found himself and Lucy in the street with Loftus, who was eager to hear what had caused the commotion, but kept silence at a word from the knight, till, through the same storm of wind and rain, they entered the small house whence they had started an hour or two before.

An old woman led them in and lighted the candles, saying : "Oh, my pretty lady, you are mighty wet. You had better go up and change your clothes."

"Presently, presently, Mistress Groves," said Lucy, "go up and light me a bit of fire in my room. I must rest and take breath for a moment."

The landlady of their little lodging was discreet, as all landladies ought to be, and at the word she left the three, who had just returned, together.

Confused with all that had passed, Lucy gazed imploringly in her father's face, seeking some comfort from his better judgment of the events which had confounded her's.

"He has escaped, my child—I do trust he has escaped," said Sir Edward, kissing her cheek, "but what is that, Lucy, you keep so tight in your hand? You gave the pass to the jailor."

"I do not know," answered Lucy, throwing a small paper on the table. "A man ran against me in the prison passage, and I found that in my hand."

The Earl's writing! The Earl's writing!" exclaimed Sergeant Loftus, who looked at the paper without ceremony. "A man dashed by me just after you went in, and the door-keeper did not try to stop him."

“And by me,” said the knight, “but that was not Bernard ;” and taking up the paper, he read the few words written upon it. They were simply: “In France, not in Virginia ; on the Rance, not on the James.”







## CHAPTER XXXII.

### REUNION OF THE LOVERS.

**T**HERE is only one thing in all the world which can give any writer permanent popularity, and this is, truthfulness—truthfulness in feeling, truthfulness in character, truthfulness of description; and this is thine especial quality most dear and excellent of men. Washington Irving, which, as long as the English language is spoken, as long as purity and good taste are felt, as long as goodness and truth are loved, will give thy works a hold upon the world's heart which never can be loosened. Eloquent nonsense may be the admired of the present day; struggles for the parturition of large thought may excite the world's half-compassionate attention for a time; but simple truthfulness is in the end the child we all love, and the one who inherits. I am about to describe places and scenes which you and I beheld more than thirty years ago. May a por-

tion of thy genius give me a portion of thy truthfulness ; for genius is but truth.\*

What did the French ever do that God should have so blessed them with a land, the richest and the most beautiful, a climate the most genial and the most equable that ever was known to man ? There are barren spots enough, there are cloudy and tempestuous days, there are places devoid of picturesque or rural beauty ; but take the Pyrenees and Auvergne, and the Jura, and the Vosges, and Vaucluse, and the Rhone, and the foison plenty of to-day and the historical memories of yesterday, and the prospects of to-morrow, there is no land like France. Its inhabitants are too happy. They have nothing to desire but change.

In a spot upon the shores of France, not far from that on which now stands the picturesque and pleasant village of St. S——, were, at the time I speak of, some four or five small neat houses of the more comfortable sort, and perhaps fifty dwellings of less pretention, but comfortable too. Not more than a mile distant, was the line where the sea curled and sparkled upon the sand, and the high bank, on which the houses were built, was itself probably but a barrier which old ocean had himself raised against the rude frolics of his own children.

At the windows of one of the better houses I

\* Written before the death of my friend.—G. P. R. JAMES.

have mentioned, on one of the first days of October, stood a party looking anxiously towards the sea, on which a small ship, apparently less than fifty tons burden, had been seen for some hours tacking towards the shore against an adverse wind. That wind was blowing very hard, and though the sky was clear and blue the waves were running high, and long lines of white crested billows stretched out as far as the eye could reach. The first question which was agitated amongst those now gazing out was the nationality of the little vessel, and the next was her safety. For although Sir Edward Langdale pointed out to those who stood by that the wind was off the land, and consequently there was much less danger in her near approach to the shore than they imagined, yet neither Lucy or Lady Langdale could divest their minds of a feeling of dread. Perhaps all they had lately gone through had served rather to decrease their courage than to augment it, and from the time they had reached the shores of France, an undefined apprehension regarding the fate of him whom they had left behind had grown up almost into a presentiment of coming evil.

In those days it did not very frequently happen that an English vessel entered the port of St. Malo which, with its beautiful bay, lay some five miles to the left of where the spectators stood, and it was the eagerness with which the peasantry and

the fishermen crowded down to the beach to watch the small ship, as well as her peculiar build, that convinced Sir Edward Langdale she was a foreign vessel. He had taken means, however, if not to ascertain the fact more accurately, at least to obtain the opinion of the hardy sailors of the Breton coast, and as they stood there watching they could see good old Pierrot Lagrange trudging up the hill towards them.

"An English ship, sir, an English ship!" said Pierrot, as he entered. "The men say they saw the flag this morning, though she has got it down now on account of the wind, I suppose."

"See, see," cried Lucy, "they are putting out a boat. Surely no boat can live in such a sea as that."

"Oh yes," answered Sir Edward, "but it is a bad coast, and it would be better to make for the port."

"They cannot get in, sir," said Pierrot Lagrange, "and there is a large ugly-looking ship out there in the distance they might not like to meet with."

"I will go down to the beach and see," said Sir Edward Langdale. "We may be able to give some assistance."

Henry Langdale accompanied his father and Pierrot; and Lady Langdale and Lucy still remained watching, with no little anxiety in the heart of each; for each moment the vague an-

xiety of which I have spoken increased, as they saw the boat first receive what seemed some common sailors, and then two other persons, who even at that distance, could be distinguished as belonging to a different class. Then came a struggling with the wind and the waves, and, tossed up and down, sometimes nothing but the sail was visible, and sometimes the boat itself, in crossing a wave, seemed almost tossed up into the air. The distance was long, and made still longer by the oblique course which the wind compelled the voyagers to take, till at length the sail was hauled down and the crew were seen to take to their oars.

It was a dreadful moment for poor Lucy Langdale, and for nearly twenty minutes the torture of suspense continued : but still the little barque bore on towards the shore, and now doubt became certainty, and fear changed almost into joy, for, in the figure which sat in the stern of the boat and held the rudder, she felt sure she beheld the form of Bernard Marsh. Not two hundred yards remained to be passed ere the keel would have touched the shore, when, from some cause not apparent from the window, the boat seemed to quiver for a moment and then went over. All seemed confusion on the beach, and several men were seen clinging to the bottom of the boat. But one plunged boldly into the sea, and while an

irresistible scream burst from Lucy's lips, Lady Langdale exclaimed, "He is swimming, my love, he is swimming. God help your father! he has put off a boat to aid them."

Still the stout swimmer buffeted the waves towards the shore, still the men clung to the capsized boat, and still Sir Edward Langdale, with a gallant crew of fishermen, bore on towards the drowning men. They saw him come nearer and nearer, pause for a moment to rescue the swimmer, and then, plying every limb, make on towards the little barque. But ere he could reach it, three or four of the men dropped from their hold and sank, and only two, it seemed, were taken off.

The dangerous part of the navigation was now to come: for the wind was blowing more fiercely than ever; but the crew of Sir Edward Langdale knew the coast well, and avoiding the sharp current which had caught the other boat, they came steadily on towards the shore, not without labour and difficulty, but in safety.

And where was Lucy Langdale when the bold men on the beach ran down almost to their shoulders in the water, and helped to pull the boat ashore? She was hardly a hundred yards distant, for when she saw it as she thought, as she hoped, out of danger, the impulse overcame her, and without a word to her mother, without preparation, almost without knowing what she did, she rushed

forth from the house, and ran down the hill with a step of light.

She saw him, she saw him, as he sprang out of the boat, him whom she had more than once thought lost to her for ever. He saw her, too, and in a minute more they were locked in each other's arms.

Nature and natural affection always find a response in the human heart, and the rude peasantry gave a cheer.





## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### BERNARD'S HISTORY OF HIS ESCAPE.

“**B**OY amidst sorrow, dear Lucy!” said Bernard Marsh, after a short burst of feeling, which could not be repressed. “I little thought to meet you on this beach; but hie thee away to your home, wherever it is, dear girl, and take Henry with you for your guard. Your father must stay with me for a few minutes.”

“Oh come, Bernard, come!” said Lucy, “I fear to part with you now, even for a moment. It seems all so like a dream, I dread to wake and find the vision vanished.”

“Alas! dear Lucy,” replied the Earl, “there are things beneath yonder rough sea which prove the vision, with all its joys and sorrows, but too true. Beneath those wild waves lies a friend—one who has proved himself a friend in need and in deed; and I cannot suffer his body to be cast on this shore without some one to tend it. Take Henry with you to protect you, and I will join you soon.”



Lucy hung her head. "It is all mixed," she said. "Can there be nothing like pure happiness here below? Let Henry stay with you. Protection? I need none. There is not one of these rough men who would not protect me. They are all kind to me, and I have striven to be kind to them since we have been here. I will do what you tell me; but I fear, when I am away, you may be rash in your efforts—no, no, no. I am foolish, Bernard. Forgive me! You will not forget that Lucy has lived only for this hour."

"And I have struggled for it against fate," answered Bernard Marsh. "There is nothing I would not do for Lucy Langdale. I would die for her; and what is more in these sad times, I have lived for her. I will not even risk the life which God had spared, lest I should bring sorrow upon her for whom that life was saved. Let that content you, my love. I will guard my life for you."

Her father interposed and urged her to depart, and he and Lord Dartmoor remained upon the beach, while the good fishermen gathered round them.

"There is no use in staying, Messieurs," said some of the men in the jargon of the country, seeming to comprehend at once the object of the two gentlemen, "the bodies will not come ashore till the tide turns, and not then, unless the wind changes. At best, they may be found miles down

to the westward. We have seen many a son, and many a brother, go down in that cursed eddy, and we know where to look for them after that."

"Then let them be well looked for," said the Earl: "Two crowns of gold apiece for every body that is recovered! There is no hope, I fear," he added in a sad tone, "that any one of them is still living."

The fishermen, who had no personal interest in the men who had gone down, and were hardened by the habit of endurance, had almost laughed; but the elder man said gravely, "They are with Christ. You might as well try to put life into that rock as to wake them from the sleep they sleep."

A short gaze on the tempestuous sea showed the Earl that the efforts that he dreamed of—for they were but as a dream—were hopeless, and after a time and a few more words and promises to the fishermen, he climbed the hill slowly with Sir Edward Langdale.

"Who is it?" asked the knight. "I see your mind is fixed upon one. I can hardly guess at any one. Who is it?"

"Alas, Sir Edward," answered Bernard Marsh, "it is Richard Langdale, your own brother. Let us say no more now. I shall have to tell the whole story hereafter; and were it not for dear Lucy, I could have wished that the sea had taken me and left him; for though he may have behaved ill to

you in days long past, his conduct since we first met has nobly atoned for whatever he formerly did amiss."

"May he find peace!" said Sir Edward. "If he ever did me wrong, it is forgiven and out of mind. It is a sad chance, Bernard; but we had so nearly met with one so much more sad, that this seems lighter. Come, let us go on."

They had paused for a short time, and when they resumed their way up the hill, Bernard added somewhat ruefully, "When first I took refuge in your house, Sir Edward, I had but a small valise, a good sword, and a brave horse. The valise is beneath yon sea, the sword is a trophy of our foes, and the horse lies on Worcester field. I come to seek my bride, unarmed and on foot."

"She is as glad to see you so, as if you brought her a carcanet of diamonds," replied the knight. "For all the rest we will find means; for you must change those dripping garments, at once; and my own Lucette has brought enough to pay all you promised to the fishermen. I thank the good God, who has given us ease—the third best of all his blessings!"

"The third?" said the Earl, in a meditative tone.

"Ay, the third!" replied the knight. "First, love, general love—for my God, for my fellow-creatures, apart of my love for God, That is his

first and greatest blessing : next is health of body and of mind ; and next is that ease in worldly circumstances which gives us enough—no more. We have enough, Bernard, and that is better than a diamond mine.”

“I can well believe,” answered Bernard Marsh, “for this day diamonds had well nigh sunk me beneath those waves. My good kinswoman, Lady Janet, sent me a collar of brilliants for Lucy, and I could not cast it into the waters. I had a few others which added little to the weight ; but I knew I might need them, and would not throw them away. A straw, they say, will sink a drowning man ; and, though I swim well, my strength was failing, when the boat came up. Let us on, however, Sir Edward, let us on ! All in this world depends upon our dividing our short time well. To be good economists, we must know the value of each moment. I have given too many, perhaps, to things that were hopeless—to things that were over. I must give the rest to that which comprehends the future as well as the past. God grant I be not selfish ! for the present is mine own, and to it I must bend all my thoughts.”

Let us pass over the next few hours rapidly—nay, without any pause. I will give the reason, presently, why I hurry my tale so rapidly on.

The common, rude, wooden shutters of a French country house were up before the windows. The

fires, which even October requires in all but southern climates, were lighted, and the wide hearth burned cheerily with piles of crackling wood. Round about sat Sir Edward Langdale and his wife, and Henry, and Lucy, with her hand clasped in that of Bernard Marsh. A little behind but still seated, was good old Pierrot Lagrange; for in that house, hired for the occasion, and at that time, when sympathetic feelings levelled artificial distinctions, the old servant took place amongst his masters.

The Earl was telling the history of his escape. We must bridge it, for it was long, each act, each incident, having an interest for his hearers which we should fail to convey were we to attempt the detail.

He had been conveyed to London, he said, by rapid marches, and yet, strange to say, his wound, though severe, had healed gradually, but perfectly. His short, somewhat unlawful trial had taken place with that of a number of others, and he had said nothing to distinguish himself from the rest. To his surprise no one came forward to prove against him ought but that he had fought in opposition to the Parliamentary army at Worcester, and he was found guilty and condemned as a common soldier. The sentence upon all was the same: to be banished the country for ever, and sold as slaves to the colonics.

All was dark enough, yet through all there came a faint glimmer of that blessed light of hope which teaches and enables to endure. But while waiting for the announcement that a ship was ready to carry him to the place of his long banishment, he was told that a stranger, a minister of religion from Savoy, desired to see him, and when admitted, he found in the stranger the monk whom he had first met in concealment at the house of his kinswoman at Childs Wickham, and who had afterwards tended him at Buckley. Long explanations succeeded, and the monk undertook to obtain for him the means of attempting his escape. Then came events of which the Earl himself could give no clear explanation. A large sum of money was produced—probably from the Lady Janet—a necklace of diamonds was brought to him for Lucy, and he was told to be ready to fly to the place of concealment prepared for him at a fixed hour on the following evening. Then came intelligence that only an hour later Lucy was to visit him in prison, and though to depart without seeing her cost a bitter struggle, the whole hopes of the future were perilled, and he consented.

The chief jailor was undoubtedly bribed by a large sum, and probably the inferiors were gained by means somewhat similar; but the Earl, to the last day of his life, had a suspicion that Cromwell

himself had closed his eyes to much that passed. It was easy to do so; for it could not be expected that in his position he should look to details; but we have already expressed our belief, that the great warrior never suffered the human sympathies, often evolved by circumstances working upon a naturally kindly nature, to act upon his fixed purposes.

However that may be, Lord Dartmoor met with no impediment within the prison. He seemed to be clothed with the invisible coat of the fairy tale for all the jailors, and about two hours before the visit of Lucy, passed out to the lodging provided for him as quietly as if he were walking freely to his home.

He knew not where she was to be found; but the monk agreed to remain at the prison, and give her the billet that Bernard left to make her acquainted with his escape and his intentions.

Shortly before her coming, the guards and the turnkeys were changed, but he contrived to linger in the passes till he heard his brother's ever remembered voice, and then he exhibited the pass he had obtained, and running against poor Lucy, contrived to press into her hand the information he desired to give.

An interval of many days followed ere any vessel could be hired to convey the fugitives to the coast of France, but at length a smuggling cutter was

engaged, and the disastrous voyage was commenced. From the first, the monk seemed impressed with a presentiment that his life was drawing to a close. He threw it not away, he did nothing rashly, but when finding themselves pursued by a ship of the Commonwealth, Lord Dartmoor proposed to land in a boat, and gave a large sum to the unwilling sailors to carry him to the shore, Richard Langdale confided to him papers and jewels of some value, and pressed his hand kindly, saying, "Remember me."

They were the last words he spoke, for every thought of himself and his companion was occupied by the perils of their stormy voyage to the shore, and the Earl had just said, without reply, "There are people down upon the beach to help us," when the boat got into the cross current caused by the rocks and went over.

There were many a detail and many a question, and many an explanation and eager looks, and beating hearts, and breaths long drawn, while the narrative was going on; but such was the tale told by Bernard Marsh, and the imagination of the reader must supply minutiae, some of which we cannot give.







## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### CONCLUSION.

**I** HAVE not yet quite forgotten the promise which I made at the end of a book published not long ago, called "Lord Montague's Page," but very little remains to be told, and that is related solely to gratify those readers who always like to know what became of everybody. The best course to pursue in order to gratify them, may be to give a picture rather than a narration, and therein to introduce at the end of about eight years the portraits of those who have figured in the preceding papers.

In this work it has been needful, with painful care, to tread warily, lest I should put my feet in the footprints of those who have previously trodden the same ground. Though I may admire, I would not imitate; and it is my habit, in writing upon a given time or subject, to put aside all works which have treated of the same themes.

But this very course may lead, by inadvertence, to the faults we would avoid, and bring over our writing a faint shadow of half-remembered things in the performances of others.

I trust, however, that no such traces of other works will be found here. I took for my principal character a young nobleman, a true cavalier, whose prototype will be easily remembered by those who have studied the history of the "Great Rebellion." I may have altered many of the circumstances, changed many of the details of his gallant and chivalrous life—to embellish them was impossible—but the main facts are correct. His devotion, as a mere boy, to the service of his king by his brother, one of a race of heroes; his love for the gentler arts of life, and the heroic courage and military skill which won for him the dignity of an Earldom when a mere youth, are here not attributed to him solely. His portrait may be seen amongst those in "Lodge," and the noble, but gentle soul is beaming from every feature.

In the full pride of health and youth, for he was not yet thirty, he sat before the fair Château of Mirepoix, gazing on the gambols of two young children, bright and beautiful as those which the great masters of the pencil have taken as their images of blessed spirits, where neither guile, nor passion, nor sin have ever entered. Speaking to him over his shoulder was his dear Lucy, not the

least faded by time, but perhaps a little touched by sorrows, which not even the breath of joy and the fragrance of renewed hope had been enabled entirely to wipe out. But she saw in those children, as they sported on the green, the return of the two brothers she had loved and lost ; and there was a strange mystic connection in memory between the devoted care which she and Bernard had bestowed upon the dear ones gone, and the love and joy found in the dear ones present, which raised up hope and confirmed faith. It seemed as if they were her dead young brothers come back, and that they were her children.

In the fine old arabesqued balcony above, sat Sir Edward Langdale with his ever dear Lucette ; and as they saw their Lucy say something to her husband, and point to the road, Sir Edward called to him, saying, "It is Henry, Bernard. I fear more bad news from the Low Countries. God send they may leave us here in peace ; but he would not come back if he had not some news to bring."

The Earl of Dartmoor turned his eyes towards the road, where a horseman, apparently a stout young man, followed by several servants, was riding on towards the château. The next moment one of those who followed him pushed forward, spoke a word or two to his leader as he passed, and then galloped on without much care of his

horse's wind, as he urged him up the hill. He passed the gates, he came on, and all soon recognized the hard features and spare form of good old Pierrot Lagrange. It might be he had forgotten the abstinence he had acquired and adhered to, in his latter days. It might be that some joy had produced as much effect upon him as strong wine ; but, as he saw the little group at the château, he took off his hat and waved it ; and as he came nearer he shouted forth, in his still strong voice, the verses which soon became common :—

“ ‘ Oliver Cromwell lies in his bed,  
Oliver Cromwell lies in his bed ;  
The devil came for him before he was dead,  
As Oliver Cromwell lay in his bed.’ ”

“Dead!” exclaimed Sir Edward Langdale.

“Dead!” said the Earl of Dartmoor ; but he added with a very grave look, “he murdered my King, and subdued my country ; but he was a gentleman. God rest his soul ! come hither, Pierrot,” he continued, “what further news ? It is hard to believe that the rebellious spirit of the country should expire with the breath of one man. When came those tidings ? Are they sure ?”

“As sure, my Lord, as death,” answered Pierrot, who had dismounted and walked up. The news reached Brussels a good many days ago. Since then we have had post upon post ; and all men’s

hearts are raised ; for it is clear that the present state of things can last no longer."

He judged rightly, it would seem. When power, tranquillity, and order depend alone upon one man's life, the future has but frail security. With rapid march events went on ; day by day, the tendency of the ever-vacillating public mind became more and more apparent ; and in a few months Bernard Marsh took his seat in the House of Peers as Earl of Dartmoor, and Edward Langdale as Baron of Buckley. They were both men of sense and of much experience, yet both were somewhat carried away by the enthusiasm of the day ; but both soon found that hope and expectation were mistaken. The agitation of the sea does not subside with the cessation of the storm. The re-action of popular commotion is often as disastrous to the people as its existence ; and it is well known that the end of the great rebellion was followed by evils more terrible than those which excited it. But there was a refuge from the tempest, which some were wise enough to seek, and in private life and domestic happiness, the two cavaliers found at last that peace which was only for a short time interrupted by the more peaceful and beneficent changes of 1688.

THE  
WORKS OF CHARLES LEVER.

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*Reprinted from Blackwood's Magazine.*

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THE name of Charles Lever is still chiefly associated with those novels by which his popularity as a writer was first secured, and by which, perhaps, his subsequent literary reputation has been in some measure overpowered. These works have probably met with a more cordial reception from the public than from the critics. Their author may, in a certain sense, defy criticism, by exclaiming like Horace, "*Pueris canto!*" He has been the biographer of boyhood. In all his earlier works he especially addresses himself to that happy portion of mankind whose digestion is yet unimpaired, whose nerves are unshaken, in whom the breath of life has no resemblance to a sigh, and who (as he himself portrays them) are ever ready to risk, with unabated ardour, a broken neck or a broken heart at every turn in the joyous chase of existence. To the verdict of such an audience Mr. Lever has every right to appeal as gaily and as confidently as Anacreon appealed to the Loves. It would undoubtedly be as ungracious to reproach the author of Charles O'Malley with the absence of those pretensions to literary dignity which he himself disclaims with so merry a laugh at dignities of every sort, as to denounce the Greek lyrist for his resolute refusal to celebrate the exploits of Atreides. To the most captious critic Mr. Lever may fairly say,—

"Non potes in nugas dicere plura meas  
Ipse ego quam dixi."

And he that can follow the adventures of HARRY LORREQUER, CHARLES O'MALLEY, JACK HINTON, and TOM BURKE, without

the frequent interruption of hearty laughter, has probably survived all sense of enjoyment in the society of the young. In any case he is not a man to be envied. To us, indeed, there is something of pathos in the reperusal of these books. It is like reading one's old love-letters, or hearing an old friend recount the frolics of one's own youth. We turn the pages with a certain tender incredulity, and there steals over us a sensation like that

"Smell of violets hidden in the green,"

which the poet declares to have

"Poured back into his empty soul and frame  
The times when he remembers to have been  
Joyful, and free from blame."

Mr. Lever's blooming young heroes, if not invariably blameless, are at least exceedingly joyful. Like the first mariners, they launch into the sea of life with breasts fortified by oak and triple brass: their constitutions are Titanic. To watch them from the beaten high road of tame and ordinary experience, dashing and glittering through a stupendous steeple-chase of astounding and never-ending adventure, literally takes away our breath. We cannot but sigh as we ask ourselves, "Was life indeed, then, at any time, such an uncommonly pleasant holiday?" Has not the world itself grown older and colder since those jaunty days when the dazzling Mr. Lorrequer drove his four-in-hand through all the proprieties? Is it possible that Mr. Lorrequer's son and heir, whom we presume to be now a hopeful cornet in the Blues, can be such a merry dog as we all remember his father to have been? Would not any such artless, but not invariably harmless, ebullitions of youthful mirth as those recorded with infinite gusto in the biography of the elder gentleman, be now visited with the severest penalties at the disposal of Bow Street, and denounced with the angriest eloquence at the command of the 'Times'? We suspect that the younger Mr. Lorrequer is a man of much sadder complexion. It would not, alas! surprise us to learn that, notwithstanding a prudent regard for his health, he is occasionally not altogether free from low spirits, especially when his natural hilarity is tempered by the prospective shadow of a competitive examination,

or vexed by the aggressive attentions of the Civil Service Commissioners. The fact is, that times are changed with us. Napoleon's Paladins are *pulvis et umbra*. Beau Brummell has paid his last debt. Duelling is a thing forsworn. Notwithstanding Dr. Parr's celebrated receipt for the gout, consisting of "prayer, patience, and port-wine," this latter source of human comfort is all but extinct. The epitaph of it is already written by Mr. Cobden in the French Treaty. The Union is an historical reminiscence. The Encumbered Estates Bill has done its work. "After life's fitful fever," O'Connell agitates no more. And Harry Lorrequer, and Charles O'Malley, and Jack Hinton, and Tom Burke, and Bagenal Daly, look down upon us from the distance of an age no longer ours. We have no hope ever again to meet them cantering in the Phoenix Park or swaggering down Sackville Street, or dancing at Dublin Castle. They are all "gone *proiapsos* to the Stygian shore." Like Achilles, and Ajax, and all the *fortes ante Agamemnonem*, they rest in an elysium of which the beatitude appears to us shadowy and unreal. But they have quaffed their last bumper, and shot their last shot—

"They lie beside their nectar, and their bolts are hurled."

And although their glittering hosts yet hover about the fading splendour of the "good old times," as the Scandinavian warriors are said by the Swedish poet to hover in the light of sunset over the horizon of the Baltic, yet we can no more recall them to tangible existence than we can renew the race of the Anakim.

Mr. Lever has himself survived his first progeny. That in growing an older, he has also grown a wiser, and in some respects a sadder man, his more recent writings bear witness. Job's second batch of sons and daughters, who were, doubtless, a much steadier set of young people than the first, could not have differed from that jovial crew who were overwhelmed in a whirlwind whilst "eating and drinking wine," more strongly than Mr. Lever's later works differ from his earlier ones.

The author of 'Harry Lorrequer' has given unquestionable proof of powers matured by time and enriched by cultivation. His more recent novels evince a greater mastery in the craft of authorship, a larger experience, and more skilled faculty of construction. But whether these qualities exist in so great a



degree as entirely to compensate the reader for the absence of that vivacity, freshness, and continuous flow of high animal spirits, which have rendered Mr. Lever's first books so widely and so justly popular, is a question which we shall presently have occasion to consider. Meanwhile, to say of such novels as 'Harry Lorrequer' and its immediate successors that they abound in extravagance, is to detract nothing from the merit of them. Youth is in itself the grandest of all extravagances; and these books are an emanation from, and the embodiment of, all the joyous audacity of young manhood. We cannot too largely estimate the extent to which Mr. Lever possesses the merit most essential to popularity in narrative composition—viz. *gusto*. He relates incidents with a relish, and accumulates them with a fecundity of invention and a rapidity of movement that never flag. Of all qualities in the genius of an author, this is the most necessary to the successful conduct of narrative interest; and we must the more admire it, wherever it is displayed, because it is innate, and neither to be acquired by labour, nor replaced by experience. It is to this rush and flow of vigorous animal life that we must attribute the indescribable attraction exerted by Homer upon the sympathies of all ages and conditions of men; and we accord to the Father of Verse a supremacy felt to be unattainable by any other poet, in recognition (which is perhaps partly unconscious) of the completeness with which he has expressed the high spirits and dauntless health of the boyhood of mankind. A recent poet, who deserves to be better known, has said that "the old gods were only men and wine." Their godship is certainly the extravagant idealization of the merely human faculties at their highest pitch. The same extravagance gives to the Homeric heroes their colossal proportions. Achilles and Hector will, to the end of time, be a head-and-shoulders taller than all other men, because it is impossible that any man should realize so intensely, or define so distinctly, as Homer, the supernatural dimensions of all natural faculties and sensations. To represent human beings precisely as they are, is not a necessary condition of art of any kind. A deformed saint by Massaccio may be truer in art than a correct anatomical study by Mr. Etty. Nor is there any reason why that extravagance of design which dilates either

human actions or human emotions, or even the situations of human life, to perfectly impossible proportions should be in itself a defect. For what is impossible in fact may be proper in art. Ariosto is undoubtedly one of the greatest narrative poets, and it is probably in his extravagance that we shall find the secret of his indefinable power. The humour of Quevedo is often most irresistible when it consists entirely of what might be called pure extravagance of expression. And such extravagance as is to be found in Mr. Lever's earlier novels is occasioned by the overflow of that exuberant vitality which constitutes their special excellence. The plan and character of these books are obviously panoramic rather than dramatic. It is by the narration of humorous incident that the interest of the reader is to be carried on. For this, rapidity and gusto are the best of all qualifications. No great writer of narrative fiction has ever been wholly without them. Le Sage possessed them largely; they are to be detected in the sadder and more profound genius of Cervantes; they are not wanting to the elaborate minuteness of De Foe; they give vigour to the most envenomed creations of Swift; they are remarkable in Sir Walter Scott, than whom, certainly, there is no happier master of the art of telling a story. Fielding, though his genius philosophizes while it frolics, was far from neglecting those means of exciting interest which depend upon the rapid movement and striking effect of incident. But Smollett certainly possessed the gift of high spirits to a pre-eminent degree. The extraordinary impulse and animation of his genius is such, that his narrative, though often extremely digressive, always rushes away with the reader, and carries him, like a runaway horse, over every obstacle, "*turbine raptus ingenii*."

In this respect Mr. Lever, of all modern novelists, most resembles the author of 'Roderick Random.' There is, indeed, not only much similarity of character between the works of Charles Lever and those of Tobias Smollett, but also no inconsiderable coincidence in the circumstances which may possibly have given to the genius of both authors something of the same tendency.

The Irish humorist, like his great Scotch predecessor, was, we believe, brought up for the medical profession, and for

some years practised as a doctor. Whether indeed Mr. Lever found his profession as little profitable to him as it would appear to have proved to Dr. Smollett, or whether he was simply impelled to abandon so sober a career by the consciousness of those powers of humour and that facility of composition which he evinced at an early age, we do not know; but it is difficult to believe that the pen which wrote 'Charles O'Malley,' or that which wrote 'Peregrine Pickle,' would have been equally well employed in signing prescriptions. To the experience of medical life, however, to the opportunities for the study of character thereby afforded, and the quickness of penetration and habits of observation thus acquired, it is highly probable that both Smollett and Lever have owed much excellent material for humorous fiction. Both authors appear to have early evinced, and long retained, an extreme predilection for a military life. Smollett, indeed, never forgave his grandfather for thwarting his inclination to enter the army; and he never omits an occasion for introducing into his novels some description of martial scenes and events. There is fair reason to attribute to both Smollett and Lever some carelessness, not so much of composition, as of writing. They both appear to have written hastily. Of Smollett it is told that (whilst writing the 'Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves') "when post-time drew near he used to retire for half-an-hour or an hour to prepare the necessary quantity of *copy*, as it is technically called in the printing-house, which he never gave himself the trouble to correct, or even to read once." And we may assume that Mr. Lever, speaking through the mask of Harry Lorrequer, is not very wide of the truth when he says, "I wrote as I felt—sometimes in good spirits, sometimes in bad—always carelessly—for, God help me! I can do no better." Smollett is, indeed, the more correct writer of the two; his style, though often hasty, is never inaccurate, and, for the most part, his English is very pure. Mr. Lever's language, on the contrary, is in places so heedless that the grammar of it is sometimes more conventional than correct. In one place he speaks of "purchasing a boon," and in another he describes an Irish member waiting "till the House was done prayers." Nevertheless he has great powers of description. He represents objects and

actions with a touch that is always vivid, often masterly. He is always happy in the open air; in his love of nature and hearty relish of out-of-door life, as well as in the force and fidelity with which he depicts them, he is certainly unsurpassed, and perhaps unequalled, by Smollett himself. The veracity, freshness, and power with which he describes scenery is deserving, we think, of higher appreciation than it has yet received. His pictures of Irish landscape, sea scenery, and all effects of wind and weather, are full of the truth and intensity which belong to poetry. It is for such reasons all the more to be regretted that an author entitled on so many grounds to hold a permanent place in literature should ever be forgetful of the duty which is owed by eminent writers to the language they bequeath to posterity. Some expressions throughout Mr. Lever's works, so incorrect as to be obvious oversights, have passed through so many editions that we must believe the *ὁ γέγραφα γέγραφα* sentiment to be in him unusually strong, and that what he writes he never revises. The bent of such minds as those of Mr. Lever and Dr. Smollett is instinctively conservative, loyal, and inclined to the maintenance of institutions which have been tested and endeared by time. On the one hand, a shrewd appreciation of life as it is, and a keen sense of the ludicrous and incongruous, indisposes them to indulge in the dreams of democracy; whilst, on the other hand, a certain chivalry of disposition induces them to side with a cause which, by the very nature of it, must always be that of the party attacked. Conservatism, therefore, has found in each of these writers a warm and ready adherent. To continue any further this passing comparison between the two authors would be tedious and pedantic; but if we turn to the books themselves, we cannot but remark a resemblance which in many respects is striking.

The merits as well as the defects of both writers are, for the most part, of the same kind. Their humour does not always rise above fun, their fun sometimes degenerates into farce. Criticism, which is applicable to such books as 'Harry Lorrequer' and 'Charles O'Malley' may equally be applied to 'Roderick Random' and 'Peregrine Pickle.' We can feel little sympathy for the heroes themselves, and still less for

the greater part of the personages by whom we find them surrounded. Roderick Random is a low-minded, selfish, unamiable character. Harry Lorrequer is not much more thoughtful of the feelings of others, and his various misdeeds are only not amenable to the gravest censure because they render gravity impossible, and compel the reader himself to become an accomplice in their impish frolic. Peregrine Pickle is a brutal savage, indulging an almost fiendish delight in the prosecution of the most barbarous practical jokes. Charles O'Malley, though much less repulsive, is certainly a brawling mischievous fellow, whose acquaintance we, for our own part, must confess we should little desire out of a book. The female characters are often too merely animal, or else too shadowy and indistinct, to inspire much interest. Of the rest of the *dramatis personæ* the larger portion is often made up of adventurers, blacklegs, practical jokers, and such oddities and odds and ends of humanity as seem only made to furnish material for practical jokes. The heroes ramble from page to page, through scenes and situations almost unconnected, and characters which crowd one portion of the book hardly appear in another.

Yet, when the critic has summed up all such apparent grounds of objection, he will find that they constitute no real defect in the art of these romances, which can only be criticized in accordance with the laws which they themselves create. The fact is, Art does not make Genius, but Genius makes Art. "Genius," says Kant, in his 'Analysis of the Sublime,' "is the talent to produce that of which one cannot give the determinating rule, and not the ability that one can show in doing that which one can learn by a rule. Hence originality is its first quality." Every writer of original genius has his own object, and his own way of carrying it out; and his success or failure can only be fairly estimated by reference to the object which he has himself had in view, not that which the critic expects him to have had in view. The barbarous conduct of the clown in the pantomime, the elfish perversity and duplicity of the Pierot in the French Harlequinade, and the excessive profligacy of the Don Juan in the play, inspire no disgust, outrage no moral sentiment, revolt no sympathy, but only excite innocent and hearty laughter.

When a clown trips up a baker in the street, wheels him off in his own barrow, trundles him into his own oven, and there bakes him alive, the fate of the baker excites no pity, and the inhumanity of his persecutor no indignation. And when Harry Lorrequer initiates his proceedings in Dublin, by gratuitously detailing to a perfectly inoffensive stranger an elaborate falsehood, and afterwards shoots the man he has insulted, without the least consciousness of any reason why he should fight him at all, we laugh at the drollery of the misdeed described, without for a moment attributing either to ourselves or the author any participation in the immorality of the conduct which causes our merriment. We know beforehand that all such victims are only men of straw, purposely so contrived as to minister to the fitting spirit of mischievous fun which presides over that entirely fantastical world wherein all that passes is too impossible in fact to come within the jurisdiction of any moral law, and yet sufficiently real in art to enthrall attention and create pleasurable emotion. It is in securing this result that the art and genius of the author consist; and we believe it is no less an authority than Sir Walter Scott who has said, "If it be the highest praise of pathetic composition that it draws forth tears, why should it not be esteemed the greatest excellence of the ludicrous that it compels laughter? The one tribute is at least as genuine an expression of natural feeling as the other." Certainly, in the power of producing effects irresistibly ludicrous, and instantaneously destructive of all gravity, Mr. Lever is pre-eminent, and may challenge comparison with any writer, living or dead. Nor is even the broad fun of Mr. Lever's earliest novels destitute of passages which indicate powers of thoughtful humour and subtle irony. Sparks's story, in 'Harry Lorrequer,' and the description in it of the man who loves a mad girl—his sensations on discovering her insanity, and hers on finding that he is not the Ace of Spades, and that she has taken "the nephew of a Manchester cotton-spinner, with a face like printed calico, for a trump card, and the best in the pack," is told with an irresistible drollery which only partially conceals a depth of grave sad satire and pathetic allegory. The story of the Knight of Kerry's conversation with the Irish tenant, who

earns his "rints" by personating a wild man in a London showroom, has in it much more than the merely ludicrous. The origin of the story would undoubtedly appear to be Hibernian, but it has also been told by Paul de Kock, with little more alteration than that of substituting Frenchmen for Irishmen, and Paris for London. Mr. Lever's version of the story, however, is far more humorous, and in all respects infinitely better than that of the French novelist. But of all the characters in Mr. Lever's earlier romances, that which affords most evidence of this higher kind of humour, is undoubtedly Mickey Free; and the story (as recounted by himself) of how he got his father's soul out of purgatory, is so excellently well told, and is so admirable a specimen of that sly wit which is characteristic of the Irish peasant, that it is with great reluctance that we refrain from extracting it.

The whole character of Mickey Free is indeed inimitable. We have no hesitation in affirming it to be the most perfect type of Irish humour that has ever been given to the world. It is perfectly sustained from first to last, and nothing in the conception of it is exaggerated or incongruous. Mickey Free is the Irish Sam Weller. He has, in fact, this advantage over Sam Weller, that he is the more thoroughly national and comprehensive type of the two. It is impossible but what this creation, which is in many respects the most felicitous of all Mr. Lever's creations, should live for ever as a distinct embodiment of national character. It must always have a historical value; and it is indeed so truthfully and so comprehensively drawn, that whoever has since attempted to describe in future the Irish peasant, has appeared to copy rather from Lever than from nature. Mickey Free, however, is but one (although, to our thinking, the best) picture in Mr. Lever's large gallery of Irish portraits.

The KNIGHT OF GWYNNE is another equally characteristic; and it is perhaps more delicately, although less vividly, delineated. Nothing can be more complete than this elaborate picture of a character which has ceased to exist—the high-bred, ill-starred Irish gentleman of the days before the Union. It is a strange anomaly, combining all the courtly grace and refinement of a Sir Charles Grandison with the rude, half-civilized life of a Rob Roy; at once splendid

and spendthrift ; chivalrous in all things, careful in nothing ; alienating prosperity, yet elevating misfortune, and always *débonnaire* in the midst of disaster ; every inch a gentleman, yet just such a gentleman as seems destined by Providence to ruin himself, and hasten the ruin of the class to which he belongs. The Knight of Gwynne is certainly one of the most lovable characters that Mr. Lever has ever drawn ; and he monopolizes so much of our sympathy, that we hope to be forgiven for extending less of it than he probably deserves to Bagenal Daly, notwithstanding the vigour with which that character is drawn, the remarkable originality of it, and the fidelity with which it represents and sustains a most peculiar combination of qualities, intellectual as well as moral.

We may, however, note here by the way that this singular character is the first of Mr. Lever's earlier creations, in which he has given evidence of that shrewd experience of mankind, that practical worldly wit, and power of philosophical epigram, into which his natural humour has developed itself in more recent works ; and there are passages of dialogue between "the Howling Wind" and his Irish Scot which not unfrequently remind one of the dry humorous wisdom which abounds in such creations as Dalgetty and Sancho Panza. This work is indeed a most complete and varied picture of Irish life and manners. The book is written with a profound knowledge of the subject of it ; and, without overloading the narrative with political or philosophical discussion, the author never loses sight of a thoughtful purpose ; he penetrates beneath the surface of the society which he describes, and lays bare, with the ease and accuracy of a skilful anatomist, all the minutest causes and remotest effects of those social and political phenomena which in Ireland preceded the Union. The Castlereagh policy is sketched with the masterly hand of a man who has thoroughly comprehended both the nature of the measure itself, and that of the country to which it referred. The whole epoch of that time is indeed reproduced, investigated, and criticized by Mr. Lever, with an accuracy of delineation and depth of reflection which show him to be not only an admirable novelist, but something also of a philosophical politician. What is especially to be noted in this book is, that all the principal



characters therein are the representatives of *genera* rather than of *species*—that is to say, they image and embody large aggregates of national character rather than individual and special peculiarities. Creation of this kind necessitates many high powers of thought as well as of fancy; and although Mr. Lever has not attempted it so often as he gives us reason to wish, yet, wherever he has done so, his success cannot be disputed. The old Irish proprietor, the old Irish domestic, the petty usurer, the Irish attorney, founders of a new race of landlords; the Irishman of the north, and the Irishman of the south—are all admirably described in the ‘Knight of Gwynne.’ Freeny, the robber, is also a very well-drawn character; and the escape of Freeny from the burning jail is a scene which in power and terror fully justifies the admiration of it formerly entertained by Miss Edgeworth.

Mr. Lever has, indeed, given many proofs that he is by no means deficient in the faculty of exciting terror, and some of his night-rides, his battle-scenes, and robber-meetings have about them a palpability and intensity which may fairly entitle them to compete for praise with Smollett’s much admired sea-engagements. It is as having given the completest and **most intense expression to Irish humour, and furnished familiar types of almost every distinction of Irish character,** that Mr. Lever, whatever may be his other merits, will, in our opinion, maintain a solid and permanent reputation as a humorist. Scenes which, in such novels as ‘O’Malley’ and ‘Hinton,’ may perhaps appear to Cockney critics as simple impossibilities, are truly facts of Irish life; and Mr. Lever has so little caricatured or exaggerated the habits and characters of Irishmen, that those parts of his Irish novels which appear absurdly unreal are only ridiculously *true*. It would be entirely beyond the scope and purpose of these remarks to discuss the relative value of any really original conception; but we see no reason to doubt why Mickey Free, and Major Monsoon, and Kerry O’Leary, and Baby Blake, Mary Martin, and Kate O’Donoghue, and Kenny, and Mrs. Dodd, should not live as long as Jeanie Deans, or Matthew Bramble, or Squire Weston, or any other distinctly-recognized type of national character.

That conviction which is entertained by Irishmen, not without a certain self-satisfaction, that their characters are all but incomprehensible to Englishmen; the humorous enjoyment which they derive from the consciousness that their ways and habits are a continual source of dismay and bewilderment to their fellow-subjects over the water; and a certain sense of not unnatural resentment, with which, some years ago, the Irish people must have been disposed to regard every attempt on the part of Government to shape out or constrain the pattern of their national life into formal accordance with the modes and manners of an alien and dominant race—have furnished Mr. Lever with many opportunities for drollery at the expense of Cockney critics. An amusing piece of good-humoured caricature in this sense occurs in the story of the gentleman who never saw daylight in Ireland, which occupies the twenty-fourth chapter of ‘Jack Hinton.’ Equally comical in its way is the quiz upon Mr. Prettyman, the “intelligent traveller.”

As instances of easy and natural Irish humour, we may refer, by the way, to the oration delivered by Kerry O’Leary over the ruins of the doctor’s gig, in the fourteenth chapter of ‘The O’Donoghue,’ and the priest’s moonlit ride in ‘Jack Hinton.’ Mr. Lever has also shown, in the death of Mary Martin, that he can, when he pleases, be pathetic as well as humorous. His female characters are seldom very refined or very interesting. In depicting a romping “wild Irish girl,” a wily adventuress, a Continental demirep, or a pretentious petticoated parvenue, he is never at fault; but his women are for the most part either *rouées*, romps, or Xantippes; and the majestic visions which animate old Chaucer’s ‘Legend of Good Women,’ and inspired Wordsworth’s picture of the “perfect woman, nobly planned,” never flit across his pages. If, indeed, modern mothers and daughters are only half as knowing, vigilant, and unscrupulous in their designs upon that portion of humanity, who have not only breeches but breeches pockets, no batchelor can have a chance against the female foe; all unmarried men are marching through an enemy’s country, in which they must expect at every step to have their flank turned by some astute matrimonial manœuvre.

We cannot, however, sufficiently praise Mr. Lever for his

evidently hearty abhorrence of all sentimentality and false writing. The most tempting occasion never betrays him into this—he is always manly, simple, and sincere in his treatment of sentiment and passion. This is no small virtue in a modern novelist—many of our modern writers, like our modern singers, are always in *falsetto*; and the public is in both cases always entrapped into applause.

Nor can we pass from the consideration of Mr. Lever's earlier romances without according our cordial approbation of the admirable ballads, fighting songs, and drinking songs, which are interspersed throughout the pages of those books. These songs are full of spirit—they have all the drollery, dash, and devilry peculiar to the land of the shamrock and shillelah. If they have here and there a flavour of poteen, the scent of the heather and the breath of the mountain breeze are equally strong in them. It is almost impossible to read them without singing them, and almost impossible to hear them sung without wishing to fight, drink, or dance. They bubble forth without premeditation from the depth of a most joyous conviction in the

“Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero  
Pulsanda tellus.”

We believe that Mr. Lever's later novels are, on the whole, less generally popular than those by which his reputation as a writer was first acquired. This is natural, for many reasons quite independent of the merits or defects of the works themselves. The public is seldom of one mind with an author in comparing the relative merit of his works, especially where such comparison is between early and subsequent efforts. The author is naturally inclined to esteem most highly those of his works upon which he is conscious of having expended most labour; the public, on the contrary, are inclined to prefer those to the enjoyment of which they have given the least labour. The first works of an original writer take us by surprise. They issue unexpectedly from the unknown, our enjoyment of them is spontaneous, and the delight occasioned by the freshness of feeling with which the author writes is increased by the freshness of sympathy with which the public reads. Every man's favourite poet is the poet he

first learned to love under the summer trees in his boyhood. New poets only address new generations. The authors which most agreeably impress us are those which we read when most capable of receiving agreeable impressions; that is to say, in youth. We cannot even entirely renew for the subsequent works of the same author those sensations of delight which we derived from our first acquaintance with him, when he was young to us, and we were young to ourselves; and in proportion as we experience this difficulty on our own part, we are inclined to resent more naturally than justly the inability of the author to overcome it. Long familiarity, moreover, with the name of an author, often indisposes the public to expect much novelty from increased familiarity with the mind of him. Nothing is so reluctantly conceded to a popular writer as superiority to *himself*. The more readily his claim to attention and sympathy has been admitted in one direction, the more resolutely is it resisted in every other. A previous success is often the greatest hindrance to a subsequent reputation. People are sometimes startled into applause by the first revelation of an original mind; they are generally on their guard against any inconsiderate approval of a second. And as the process by which the mind of an author passes from one phase into another is usually gradual, and marked by various stages of development more or less imperfect and unsatisfactory, the advance made is not always immediately noticeable, and the recognition accorded to it is naturally slow and dubious. This must be especially the case with an author who has introduced himself to the public rather as a boon-companion than a moralist. We have often heard it said of Mr. Lever that he is much less funny than he used to be; which is indeed true. But when it is asked why he does not resort to the style and matter of his early novels, and implied that he should write nothing but 'Harry Lorrequer's' and 'Charles O'Malley's,' we must express the conviction that compliance with any such demand, even if it were not purely impossible, would be altogether unadvisable. We could not ourselves bring to the perusal of repeated 'Harry Lorrequer's' an undiminished capacity to be amused by them. *Consuetudine vilescent*. The piper might pipe as of old, but who would dance to his piping? *Non eadem est ætas, non*

*mens*. We cannot blame Mr. Lever for abandoning a ~~vein~~ of humour which he has the merit of having exhausted ; but it is nevertheless obvious, that in relinquishing that particular kind of fiction in which he is allowed to have excelled, Mr. Lever has withdrawn from a territory of which he was sole and undisputed proprietor, and entered upon one in which, whatever the acquirements he may bring to the cultivation of it, he is not without competitors.

It must be conceded that what we miss in Mr. Lever's later publications is that freshness, vivacity, and exuberant wealth of animal spirits, which gave to his earlier novels their chief charm. Although the relative merit of his recent works is decidedly unequal, some of them being much better than others, and all of them being better in one part than in another ; yet there is in the majority of them a sameness of subject and material which does not give fair play to the powers employed upon them. Upon this point we shall speak more fully by-and-by ; but whatever objections we may presently have to make in detail to some of Mr. Lever's last books, we have no hesitation in expressing the opinion, that amongst these books are to be found proofs of a genius richer, maturer, and more pleasing than any which is apparent in the earlier works of the same author. Indeed, 'The Dodd Family Abroad,' which has not been published many years, is in our opinion the best of all Mr. Lever's works. He has written nothing at any time comparable to the letters of Henry Dodd ; nor could there be any better evidence than what is afforded throughout the pages of this delightful and good-humoured satire, that the genius of the author, if it has lost much of that physical animation which is the arbitrary gift of youth, has acquired with years that thoughtful and more pleasing humour which is the result of enlarged experience and deeper sympathy with mankind. This chronicle of the adventures of 'THE DODD FAMILY ABROAD,' like 'The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker,' Smollett's last and most pleasing fiction, is a narrative thrown into epistolary form, and related by the actors themselves, who are thus made with great skill to be, as it were, the unconscious exponents of their own characters, follies, and foibles, as well as the historians of their own fates. We do not desire to

suggest even a critical comparison between this clever romance and that master-piece of Smollett, which will doubtless remain unrivalled as long as the English literature endures. But the most conspicuous merit in 'The Dodd Family' is, that each character in the story is so contrived as to evoke, in the most humorous form, the peculiarities of all the others, without any violation of the individuality assigned to itself. The book, which is a sort of prose 'Fudge Family,' deeper, broader, and more comprehensive than Moore's clever satire, is a good-humoured but unsparing mockery of "false pretences" all over the world. If the dramatic power exist in the capacity to realize and express with an accuracy, too great for mere conjecture, other people's habits of thought and feeling, Mr. Lever has shown in this book more of such power than in anything else he has ever written. The humour of his earlier books is almost entirely superficial. It deals purely with external things, and is little more than any extraordinarily acute sense of the ludicrous in situation and circumstance. In this book the humour is of that rarer kind which plays less with external and accidental peculiarities than with men's modes of thought, and the manner in which different minds are impressed by the same facts, or operated on by the same influences. The difference of the result in each case is great. The highest humour is inseparable from a profound sympathy with human nature, and is therefore always tinged with sadness. For man is too grand a subject, after all, for eternal practical jokes, and even the most defaced and misfeatured humanity should be safe from unmitigated laughter. The fun which abounds, however, in Mr. Lever's more youthful writings, ignores the existence of sorrow in any sense but that of hateful deformity, to be contemplated as little as possible : and consequently this sort of fun, incompatible as it is with any deep sympathy, is never quite free from a certain element of cruelty, inherent to the strong animal life of early youth. But what is most delightful in the letters of "K. I." is that loving, tender capacity to feel for and with humanity in all the forms of its imperfection and weakness—that tendency to live in the life of others, and to draw from the various thoughts and acts and manners of mankind constant food for reflection, which breathe

through the playful satire, and furnish material to the genial humour of those charming letters. And though the author appears to have given fuller scope both to his own sentiments and his own experience in the letters of "K. I.," yet the same spirit of kindly humour, and the same shrewd appreciation of social characteristics, are apparent in all the epistles, even where the drollery most approaches to caricature, as in those of the Irish servant-girl who complains to her friends at home of being like "a pelican on a dissolute island."

Of all Mr. Dodd's numerous misfortunes, those under which his patience is most pathetic, and which enlist our warmest sympathies, are certainly his domestic and conjugal afflictions. Who that remembers or anticipates matrimonial experience can read without a cold shudder this description of the household tactics adopted on great occasions by Mrs. Dodd?—

"For the last week Mrs. D. had adopted a kind of warfare, at which she, I'll be bound to say, has few equals and no superior—a species of irregular attack, at all times and on all subjects, by innuendo and insinuation, so dexterously thrown out as to defy opposition; for you might as well take your musket to keep off the mosquitoes! What she was driving at I never could guess, for the assault came on every flank and in all manner of ways. If I was dressed a little more carefully than usual, she called attention to my 'smartness;' if less so, she hinted that I was probably going out 'on the sly.' If I stayed at home, I was waiting for somebody; if I went out, it was to 'meet them.' But all this guerilla warfare gave way at last to a grand attack, when I ventured to remonstrate about some extravagance or other. 'It came well from me,' she burst forth with indignant anger—'it came well from me to talk of the little necessary expenses of the family—the bit they ate, and the clothes on their backs.' She spoke as if they were Mandans or Iroquois, and lived in a wigwam!"

Poets, we are told by one of them, "learn in suffering what they teach in song," and philosophers acquire wisdom from their own afflictions. Mr. Dodd, in the true spirit of the philosophy preached by Æschylus, *παρ' ἄκοντας ἤλθε σωφρονεῖν*, thus moralizes on his own misfortune:—

"Ah, Tom, my boy, it's all very good fun to laugh at Keeley, or

Backstone, or any other of those diverting vagabonds who can convulse the house with such a theme, but in real life the Farce is downright Tragedy. There is not a single comfort or consolation of your life that is not kicked clean from under you ! A system of normal agitation is a fine thing, they tell us, in politics, but it is a cruel adjunct of domestic life ! Everything you say, every look you give, every letter you seal, or every note you receive, are counts in a mysterious indictment against you, till at last you are afraid to blow your nose, lest it be taken for a signal to the fat widow lady that is caressing her poodle at the window over the way !”

But his greatest trial of all is the prospect of a sudden accession of fortune to the ambitious partner of his bosom. His excessive alarm at the possibility of a contingency so fatal to domestic happiness is very humorous, and his opinions upon the subject of legacies to married ladies in small circumstances are evidently the result of profound and painful experience.

“To tell you the plain truth, Tom, I don’t know a greater misfortune for a man that has married a wife without money, than to discover at the end of some fifteen or twenty years that somebody has left her a few hundred pounds ! It is not only that she conceives visions of unbounded extravagance, and raves about all manner of expense, but she begins to fancy herself an heiress that was thrown away, and imagines wonderful destinies she might have arrived at, if she hadn’t had the bad luck to meet you. For a real crab-apple of discord, I’ll back a few hundreds in the Three per Cents. against all the family jars that ever were invented.

“Save us, then, from this, if you can, Tom. There must surely be twenty ways to avoid the legacy ; and so that Mrs. D. doesn’t hear of it, I’d rather you’d prove her illegitimate, than allow her to succeed to this bequest. I’ll not enlarge upon all I feel about this subject, hoping that by your skill and address we may never hear more of it ; but I tell you, frankly, I’d face the small-pox with a stouter heart than the news of succeeding to the M’Carthy inheritance.”

The adventures of a vulgar Irish family abroad in search of economy combined with pretension and display, afford Mr Lever a good opportunity for satirising the social and political condition of a great number of foreign States. In doing this he has shown not only an affluent experience of Continental life, and a quick perception of all social phenomena,



but also a very uncommon amount of shrewd common-sense and sound political judgment. We must say the satire is well deserved and unerringly aimed. Nothing escapes. The state of society, the conduct of government, the foreign and domestic policy, the administration of justice, the civil and military jurisdictions, the morals and manners of Continental capitals, are sharply canvassed. The character, too, of Kenny Dodd, in its strange admixture of childishness and wisdom, ignorance of the world and knowledge of mankind, and that subdued humorous consciousness which it betrays of the utter worthlessness of those influences to which it is ever an easy victim, greatly facilitates the indulgence of that moralizing vein in which Mr. Lever reviews almost every possible aspect of society. From the moment in which K. I. discovers that "shamelessness is the grand characteristic of foreign life," and that "one picks up the indecency much easier than the irregular verbs," the wisdom of his private reflections keeps pace with the folly of his public proceedings.

We extract the following passage from Mr. Dodd's reflections upon geology and the sciences, viewed in their relation to education and politics, because it is a favourable sample of a particular kind of humour in which Mr. Lever's later writings, and especially the work from which the passage is taken, are equally fertile and felicitous. It is a humour which consists in turning some indisputable truth upside down or inside out when the reader is least expecting it. The effect is often irresistible.

"For a man who has daughters abroad, my advice is—stick to the sciences. Grey sandstone is safer than the polka, and there's not as dangerous an experiment in all chemistry as singing duets with some black-bearded blackguard from Naples or Palermo. Now mind, Tom, this counsel of mine applies to the education of the young, for when people come to the forties, you may rely upon it, if they set about learning anything, they'll have the devil for a schoolmaster. What does all the geology mean? Junketting, Tom—nothing but junketting! Primitive rock is another name for a Pic-nic, and what they call Quartz is a figurative expression for iced champagne. Just reflect for a moment and see what it comes to. You can enter a protest against family extravagances when they take the shape of balls and soirees, but what are you to do against botanical excursions and anti-

quarian researches? It's like writing yourself down Goth at once to oppose these. 'Oh, papa hates chemistry; he despises natural history,' that's the cry at once, and they hold me up to ridicule just in the way the rascally Protestant newspapers did Dr. Cullen, for saying that he didn't believe the world was round. If the liberty of the subject be worth anything—if the right for which these same Protestants are always prating, private judgment, be the great privilege they deem it—why shouldn't Dr. Cullen have his own opinion about the shape of the earth? He can say, 'It suits *me* to think that I'm walking erect on a flat surface, and not crawling along with my head down, like a fly on the ceiling! I'm happier when I believe what doesn't puzzle my understanding, and I don't want any more miracles than we have in the church.' He may say that, and I'd like to know what harm does that do you or me? Does it endanger the Protestant succession or the State religion? Not a bit of it, Tom. The real fact is simply this: private judgment is a boon they mean to keep for themselves, and never share with their neighbours! So far as I have seen of life, there's no such tyrant as your Protestant, and for this reason: it's bad enough to force a man to believe something that he doesn't like, but it's ten times worse to make him disbelieve what he's well satisfied with; and that's exactly what they do. Even on the ground of common humanity it is indefensible. If my private judgment goes in favour of saints' toe-nails and martyrs' shin-bones, I have a right to my opinion, and you have no right to attack it. Besides, I won't be badgered into what it may suit somebody else to think. My opinion is like my flannel-waistcoat, that I'll take off or put on as the weather requires; and I think it very cruel that I must wear mine simply because you feel cold."

When Mr. Dodd moralizes on the field of Waterloo, his words are the words of wisdom. Could Mr. Mill himself be more logical on the subject of Divine Right? All the political philosophers in the world could add but little to this pithy summary of the case, as between kings and peoples:—

"I know you'll reply to me with your old argument about Legitimacy and Divine Right, and all that kind of thing. But, my dear Tom, for the matter of that, haven't I a divine right to my ancestral estate of Tullylicknaslatterley; and look what they're going to do with it, to-morrow or next day! 'Tis much Commissioner Longfield would mind, if I begged to defer the sale on the ground of 'divine right.' *Kings are exactly like landlords; they can't do what they like with their own, hard as it may seem to say so. They have their obligations and their duties; and if they fail in them, they come into*

*the Encumbered Estates Court just like us—ay, and just like us, they 'take very little by their motion.'*

"I know it's very hard to be turned out of your 'holding.' I can imagine the feelings with which a man would quit such a comfortable quarter as the Tuileries, and such a nice place for summer as Versailles; Dodsborough is too fresh in my mind to leave any doubt on this point: but there's another side of the question, Tom. What were they there for? You'll call out, 'This is all Socialism and Democracy, and the devil knows what else.' Maybe I'll agree with you. Maybe I'll say, I don't like the doctrine myself. Maybe I'll tell you that I think the old time was pleasantest, when if we pressed a little hard to-day, why, we were all the kinder to-morrow, and both ruler and ruled looked more leniently on each other's faults. But say what we will—do what we will—these days are gone by, and they'll not come back again. There's a set of fellows at work, all over the world, telling the people about their rights. Some of these are very acute and clever chaps, that don't overstate the case; they neither go off into any flights about Universal Equality, or any balderdash about our being of the same stock; but they stick to two or three hard propositions, and they say, '*Don't pay more for anything than you can get it for—that's free trade; don't pay for anything you don't want—that's a blow at the Church Establishment; don't pay for soldiers if you don't want to fight—that's at a 'standing army;'*' and above all, *when you haven't a pair of breeches to your back, don't be buying embroidered small-clothes for Lords-in-Waiting or Gentlemen of the Bedchamber.'* But here I am again, running away from Waterloo, just as if I was a Belgian."

K. I. has certainly no pretension to be a faultless philosopher, but he is a very pleasant one. Montaigne would have chosen him for a companion. Molière would have sympathised with and loved him. He has so large a sympathy for human nature, that his own claim upon that of the reader is irresistible; and so kindly and compassionate a feeling for the imperfections of mankind, that we follow him with undiminished affection through all the faults and follies that he so frankly attributes to himself. He so innocently pleads guilty to the occasional "delight of doing wrong;" there is something so natural in the touch of envy with which he remarks that "India-rubber itself is not so elastic as a bad character," and so sly an appeal to commiseration in his candid avowal, "I don't want to disparage principle, no more than I do a great balance at Coutts's, or anything else that I don't

possess myself," that all such good-humoured self-accusations are at once understood to be among the philosophical paradoxes peculiar to that vein of banter which proves all problems by the *ad absurdum* argument, and which he frequently indulges at his own expense. Mr. Lever is, indeed, so happy in the management of dialogue, and in the art of allowing his characters to evolve themselves without interference from the author, that there is every reason to think he would be successful in the comic drama: and were he to exercise his genius in that direction we have little doubt but what he would do much to rescue the English stage from its present discreditable obligation to the charity of third-rate French play-wrights. Our extracts from 'The Dodd Family' have extended over a larger space than we could well afford, because it is our sincere opinion that Mr. Lever has written nothing comparable to this book; and without ample reference to the work itself, it was hardly possible to justify the opinion which we have not hesitated to express about it.

The 'Dodd Family' is an elaborate denunciation of the folly of "people living upon false pretences;" and 'Davenport Dunn,' which deals with the crimes rather than the follies of society, exposes with considerable power, and an extraordinary knowledge of the dark side of modern civilization, the innumerable "fraudulent pretences" of roguery in every rank of life. The character of Dunn himself, which is that of the brilliant commercial swindler, the Robert Law of these days, whose roguery is on a magnificent scale, is carefully drawn; and Mr. Lever has certainly the merit of never allowing himself to be tempted into conventional exaggeration of this character. Davenport Dunn is a rascal of genius, and throughout all his roguery he remains sufficiently human and natural (the good being never entirely obliterated by the evil in his complex character) to justify to the last the interest which his career excites in the mind of the reader. His ambition, before it comes in contact with distracting and debasing influences, is legitimate, and even noble; and the gradual deterioration of a character whose power is uncontrolled by principle, is finely worked out. But the best and most powerful character in this book—a character in which Mr. Lever has shown, in addition to his ordinary knowledge

of the world, no ordinary knowledge of human nature—is that of Grog Davis, the professional “sporting swindler.” This man, a vulgar blackleg, and in all his dealings with society a most unmitigated scoundrel, nevertheless affects us with a sense of power, and secures from us a degree of interest which it would be impossible to feel for a character of which the delineation was less true to the deepest realities of nature. The whole conception of this character is, indeed, of the highest order. The one redeeming point in the much-defaced humanity of this man, and the secret of the strong dramatic interest which he excites, lies in his devoted and absorbing affection for his daughter.

Whatever he has in him better than the fiend, or above the brute, is concentrated in this affection, of which the pathos is all the more poignant from the power of nature which it indicates, and the contrast which it suggests with the prostitution of that power in the habitual life of the man. The professional associations of Grog Davis with the turf and the fashionable gambling-houses of Europe, bring him into daily contact with the most worthless and demoralized members of the upper ranks of society. Their ambition to be knaves renders them only the dupes of a knavery more practised and audacious than their own; and the contempt of the professional swindler for those who, though his superiors in social rank, are only his equals in infamy, and his inferiors in the dexterity which renders infamy partially profitable, is embittered by his haunting consciousness that they are by birthright the inheritors of what a man may desecrate but cannot transfer, and that the sphere from which they descend into connection with him is one into which, by no possible connection with them, is he able to elevate himself. His dreary and restricted experience teaches him that there is no moral degradation which men will not incur for the sake of money, and from this he argues to the conclusion that there is no social disability which may not be overcome by that all-powerful agent. He therefore labours to accumulate wealth dishonestly, in order that he may make his child rich enough to be honest. What matter though his own hands be soiled?—hers shall be stainless! What matter though he heap infamy on himself, if it be to bequeath to her the purity and inno-

cence which, the further it is removed from the depths of his own degradation, the more he delights to contemplate and revere in the future of his child? The profligate gentlemen who are his boon companions may laugh away, in the course of a night's debauch, the reputation of every duchess in England; but where is he, so bold of tongue, or so sure of his pistol-practice, as shall dare to find a spot on the character of the daughter of the "infamous Grog Davis?" Whilst he, for her sake, is plotting nefarious plunder, in the company of men whose presence is pollution, she, an innocent happy girl, in her convent at Brussels, shall be learning all that can refine and elevate life—the associate of spotless maidens, and the pupil of the most accomplished teachers that money can secure. And in all this notable scheme nothing is overlooked save that alone which involves the inevitable failure of it. It never occurs to the remarkable natural shrewdness of a man whose experience, however varied, is limited exclusively to evil, that in this world, where the consequences of evil are endless, the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, and that, in the eye of society, the daughter of the "infamous Grog Davis," were she wise as Sheba, and pure as Ruth, can never be other than the child of infamy, and the inheritor of shame. And so complete is his inability to realize or comprehend any but social distinctions between right and wrong, that although there is no self-sacrifice of which he is not capable to secure the happiness of his child, and no barbarity in which he would scruple to indulge his vengeance on the man who should injure her, yet he is himself a conspirator to sell her in marriage to the most abjectly worthless and contemptible of all his infamous associates, simply because that man is brother and heir to a peer of the realm. That the daughter of Grog Davis should be a peeress, for this Grog Davis schemes to secure as his son-in-law a man whom he knows to be guilty of forgery, and whom he himself despises as a poltroon. This is the summit of his ambition. And how a theory of life which insults human nature is defeated by human nature itself; how the human heart vindicates its inherent birthright to the control of its own destinies, and avenges upon itself the wrongs inflicted by itself upon its better aspirations; how, out of the utter wreck, and failure of

all that unscrupulous ingenuity can devise for the attainment of unworthy desires, arises at the last, in the mere might of man's common instinct to be good, something which reconciles the fact of human sin to our faith in human nature, and seems to vindicate the hope of a distant but ultimate salvation,—is shadowed forth in the development and destiny of these two characters, with a masterly power and depth of insight which not unfrequently reminds us of Balzac.

Before we pass from the consideration of this work, we may remark, as regards the entire conception of it, that considerable skill is evinced in the mechanism by which Mr. Lever contrives to show that every rogue is limited, in his power to do mischief, to the use, as it were, of a single engine, and that he who assails honest men with one kind of weapon is liable to be himself overthrown by his ignorance of the fence peculiar to some other species of rascality. Thus, for instance, the amateur blackguard Annesley Beecher, is no match for the professional blackleg Grog Davis ; and Grog Davis, in turn, with all his craft and audacity, is no match against the more astute tactics of Davenport Dunn, the refined and comprehensive rascal ; whilst even Dunn is overreached at last by the combined common-sense of the honest portion of society ; so that, with this species of vermin, as with all others, the rhyme holds good, that

“ Greater fleas have little fleas,  
Upon their legs to bite 'em ;  
And little fleas have lesser fleas,  
And so *ad infinitum*.”

There are some admirable characters in Mr. Lever's last novel. Mrs. Penthony Morris is excellent. So, in another way, is Mr. Ogden, the bully of a public office, the sycophant of secretaries of state, and the tyrant of junior clerks, the pedant of Downing Street, and the bore of all society. There is nothing more delightful than to see a bully cowed ; and the absolute terror and anguish of Ogden when he unexpectedly encounters, on the Continent, the fascinating wife from whom he has been divorced, the groan of positive pain into which his pompous compliment is suddenly converted by a single glance at the person for whom it was destined

with the most approved conventional gallantry, is inimitable. There is something even which claims our sympathy in the capacity for common human suffering thus revealed beneath all the small formalities of the man. Layton, the lost man of genius, is of a higher range, and there is considerable power, and not a little pathos, in Mr. Lever's vigorous sketch of this character. But, perhaps, the best-sustained character in the book is that of the Yankee, Leonidas Shaven Quakenboss.

In the delineation of this character Mr. Lever has evinced one merit, for which, perhaps, he can hardly hope to receive due appreciation from the majority of readers. Quakenboss is, so far as we know, almost the only Yankee of English manufacture in whose figures of speech the purely Yankee idiom, peculiar to the New England States, is not constantly confounded with the slang of the South and West. Mr. Lever is also deserving of approval for not having allowed the merely ludicrous in a subject so obviously open to coarse caricature, to overpower his finer perception of what are the better and worthier qualities of the Yankee character. In this respect, however, he has been anticipated by Sir E. Lytton.

There is certainly no lack of power in Mr. Lever's later novels. On the contrary, they contain writing of great power, and evince qualities which belong to a genius of a higher order than we discover in his earlier, and still, perhaps, more popular books. Had he never written anything but the 'Dodd Family,' that work alone would have entitled him to take undisputed rank among the humorists of England; and had that work been the first of a hitherto unknown writer, the sensation it would have excited must have been very great. But familiarity, if it does not breed contempt, often induces indifference. If Aristides had taken to rope-dancing, perhaps he would not have been ostracised by the Athenians. Popularity is an alms which, the more cheerfully it is accorded to a first appeal, the more churlishly is it conceded to a second from the same quarter. When we see a boy in the street standing on his head, if we are in a good humour we fling him a penny, but the next time we see him turning a somersault, we only say, "There's that boy again!" and button up our pockets. Still, there are undoubtedly



drawbacks to the claim of Mr. Lever's later works on general sympathy and approval for which he is himself responsible ; and we have reserved to the last the few remarks which we have to make of an unfavourable nature in reference to these works, because the cordial recognition which we have already expressed of their author's ability will be the best guarantee for our sincerity in objecting to the subjects on which that ability is sometimes exercised. There is a sameness of subject about the majority of Mr. Lever's younger novels which is partly counterbalanced by the fact that such sameness lies at least within the sphere of a more or less national interest, such as the portraiture of Irish life. But the continued repetition of scenes representative of a kind of society which is neither familiar nor pleasing to a large class of English readers, which is the characteristic of nearly all Mr. Lever's later works, is under any circumstances a mistake. The frivolity of Continental society, the vulgarity and mistakes of English travellers abroad, and the tricks and deceptions of sharpers and adventurers, is a very legitimate subject for satire ; but it has really been exhausted with great success in the 'Dodd Family,' and we regret to see it enter so largely into the staple material of Mr. Lever's subsequent novels. However excellent may be the cookery, and skilful the arrangement of the dishes, we object to continual invitations to dine off the leavings of any feast, however good ; it is not hospitality, but thrift, which would force us to drain the last flagon and swallow the last crumb.

" The funeral baked meats  
But coldly furnish forth the marriage-feast."

In such works as 'DAVENPORT DUNN,' and 'ONE OF THEM,' the genius of the author carries everything before it. But the subject of such a story as 'The Daltons' can, we should think, have little interest for the mass of the public. We need not defend these remarks from the imputation of a false and vulgar morality which would exclude from fiction its legitimate sources of interest in the delineation of crime and the analysis of evil. Nothing in human nature can be alien to art, which derives from nature all its materials. All we ask from an author is to preserve the balance and proportion

of the emotions, to which he appeals. To be continually poring over the blots and failures of humanity, or the vices and corruption of any social state, is neither profitable nor pleasant. And the perusal of a series of fictions which present to us only the deformities of nature, and detain us without relief or intermission in the society of sharpers and vagabonds, and all manner of vicious or vulgar persons, becomes fatiguing and painful. As we close one after the other of such books, we feel like men returning from a hell. Our gains are not equivalent to the unpleasurable process of their acquirement, and we long for some more wholesome intercourse with mankind. The highest and most truthful art must occasionally hold intercourse with evil, but it is a mistake in art to make that intercourse habitual. When an author continually presents to our view one side only, either of society or of man's heart, and that the most unpleasant of all, he appears to imply—not that this is to be found in society or human nature, and is worth looking at—but that nothing else is to be found in society or human nature, and that this is worth looking at; and we revolt from acquiescence in any such view of a cause which is, after all, our own. Our estimation of the genius of Le Sage would be much lower if he had written half-a-dozen small 'Gil Blas; and if Fielding had written many 'Jonathan Wilds,' we should be disposed to think less highly of the mind that made 'Tom Jones.' We attribute this defect to what is, perhaps, in itself a conscientious quality. We think that Mr. Lever is apt to be content to draw his materials for fiction too exclusively from *observation*. Human nature is indeed inexhaustible, but no one man's observation of human nature can be so. The widest experience is limited, and the limit of it must be reached at last. There is only one inexhaustible source for fiction, and that is the Imagination.

But the imagination itself is an engine which cannot be kept in frequent operation without being frequently supplied with fuel. It cannot act without being first acted upon. And the fault we are inclined to attribute to the majority of our modern writers of romance is, that they give out too much and take in too little. Let men say what they will about native originality, man is not really a creator. He changes,

improves, and extends, that is all. *Ex nihilo nihil fit* ; and the best new ideas are the product of a large accumulation of old ones. Those authors who rely chiefly upon personal observation and experience for the materials of fiction, cannot be too careful to vary their point of sight pretty often. Every imaginative writer must at some period have experienced the feelings expressed by Cowley, when he wrote—

“The fields which sprang beneath the ancient plough,  
Spent and outworn, return no harvest now,  
And we must die of want,  
Unless new lands we plant.”

If Mr. Lever is disposed to dispute the justice of these observations, or, at any rate, their special application to himself, he may certainly refer to the extraordinary sameness of a vast number of his contemporary novelists, who do not seem, on that account, to enjoy less popularity. One set of writers can talk of nothing but governesses, tutors, and athletic curates, who love fly-fishing and abhor Strauss. The domestic novel happens to be in fashion, and we certainly have enough of it. Others are never happy out of the precincts of Pall-Mall and the clubs, unless it be at a fashionable watering-place ; and some can give no flavour to English fiction without importing it from Florence or Rome, or borrowing their intrigue from the secret societies, and their sentiment from Mazzinian manifestoes. But Mr. Lever is immeasurably richer in imagination and power than all such writers ; and if he would occasionally emigrate to “fresh fields and pastures new,” he has already all that is needful in the way of stock and capital. He may be contented with his present reputation, which is extensive and likely to be permanent ; but we believe that it is in his own power to elevate and enlarge it.

“Count no man happy till he has ceased to live,” says the Greek proverb. Sum up the attributes of no genius till it has ceased to act or to write. The last work of an author may sometimes be the first which gives a just idea of his mind as a whole.

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